END OF EMPIRE

100 DAYS in 1945 that Changed Asia and the World

DAVID P. CHANDLER, ROBERT CRIBB
AND LI NARANGOA, GENERAL EDITORS

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

End of Empire

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General Editors

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10 August 1945, around noon. Devastation surrounds the first *torii* gate of Sannoh Shrine, in the vicinity of Iwakawa-machi, Nagasaki, 700 m. south of the blast epicentre. Situated parallel to the blast wave, the gate escaped destruction.

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Introduction

THE SECOND WORLD WAR began in Asia, with the Japanese invasion of China in July 1937; it ended there with Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945. Nowhere in Asia, however, did the end of the war mean the end of conflict. Political and social battles emerged and re-emerged on local, regional and international fronts. The nature and trajectory of these struggles, some of which persisted for decades, were profoundly influenced by the political and military circumstances of the 100 days that followed the Japanese surrender. August 15th marked the end of the Japanese empire but events of the subsequent 100 days foreshadowed the demise of other empires and set into motion developments that transformed the post-war world.

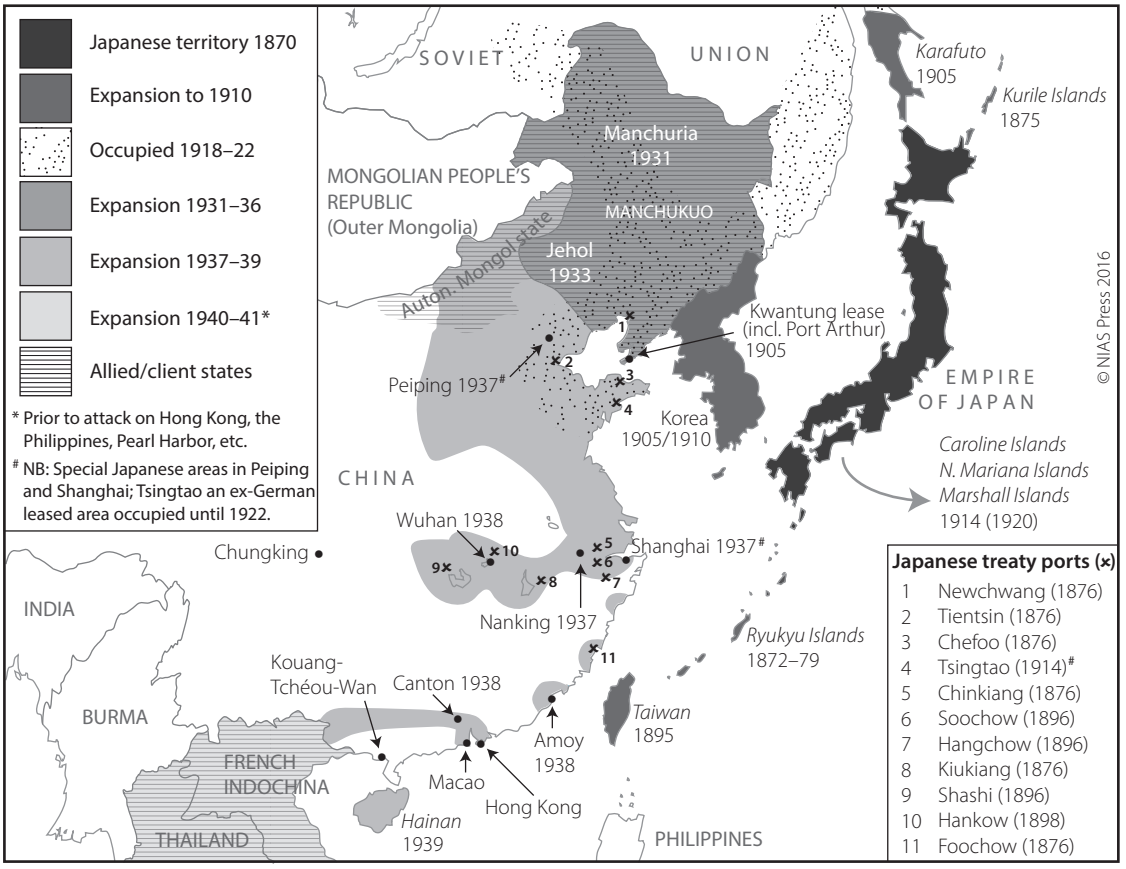
Official poster for the 1940 Summer Olympics, scheduled to be held in Tokyo but cancelled in 1938 due to the Sino–Japanese War.

The war in Asia

In 1937, Japan was the only truly sovereign power in Asia. It had three kinds of international identity. First, it was a modern power, the partner of comparable Western powers in directing and regulating world affairs. Two decades earlier, it had joined the Allies in fighting Germany in the First World War and had been rewarded with a share of the former German colonies and a permanent seat on the council of the League of Nations. Its position in this global elite became fraught because of its invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and it had temporarily withdrawn from the League. But the other powers soon accepted Japanese hegemony in Manchuria as a fait accompli and in 1936 Japan was selected to host the 1940 Olympic Games. Second, Japan was a colonial power. Since opening to the West in the mid-nineteenth century, it had established colonial rule over neighbouring regions – Okinawa, Sakhalin, Taiwan, Korea

and Manchuria – basing both its imperialist rationale and its colonial practice on what it interpreted as Western models. After 1932, its efforts to expand its control and influence in China proper were increasingly aggressive. Third, Japan was a beacon for Asian societies by virtue of its successful modernization and its position in world affairs. Especially after victory in the Russo–Japanese War (1904–05), Japan stood for the potential for Asian societies to resist the West and to achieve modernity and prosperity by their own efforts.

Japan's great neighbour, China, was led by the Kuomintang (KMT) government of Chiang Kai-shek. The KMT had subdued many of the country's warlords in bitter struggles during the 1920s. In the 1930s, however, this corrupt and authoritarian government faced a continuing military challenge from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Mao Tse-tung. From 1931, moreover, it lost region after region to Japanese influence and control. Manchuria fell to Japanese domination in 1931 and nearby Jehol in 1933. The Kwantung Army, a Japanese force, sponsored the creation of a nominally independent state in Manchuria in 1932, calling it Manchukuo. The Japanese government under



Japanese expansion to 1941.

Inukai Tsuyoshi was reluctant to recognize Manchukuo, but right-wing and militarist forces became increasingly powerful in the government. Following Prime Minister Inukai's assassination in May 1932, his successors recognized Manchukuo and approved the Kwantung Army's actions. Japanese forces gradually came to dominate northern China and obtained footholds further south. In addition, in northern China and Inner Mongolia, the Japanese army created client administrations that gave local leaders some role in government while excluding KMT influence.

Southeast Asia was largely under colonial rule: the United States in the Philippines, France in Indochina, Britain in Burma and Malaya, the Netherlands in the Indonesian archipelago and a tiny Portuguese enclave in East Timor. Formally independent Siam had lost most of its outlying territories to Britain and France decades earlier and had been forced to make far-reaching economic concessions to Western businesses as well. Both Burma and the Philippines had a high degree of internal autonomy, whereas Indochina, Malaya and Indonesia remained under authoritarian colonial regimes. Vietnamese and Indonesian nationalist movements had been active since early in the 20th century but the French and Dutch authorities had repressed them. Japanese individuals were prominent in Southeast Asian societies and economies.

In July 1937, Japanese troops stationed at the Japanese legation in the former Chinese capital of Peiping (Peking) clashed with Chinese government forces at Marco Polo Bridge south of the city. A trivial pretext of searching for a missing Japanese soldier caused this clash. Similar incidents in the past had led to the piecemeal expansion of Japanese control. On this occasion, however, Chinese troops fiercely resisted the Japanese attack. This vigorous response was a result of the rising anti-Japanese nationalism among Chinese coupled with the fact that Chiang Kai-shek had been persuaded in the end of 1936 to reach an accommodation with the CCP and join forces with them against further Japanese aggression. Chinese forces not only resisted in the north but also attacked Japanese positions in China's commercial capital, Shanghai. In November 1937, after three months of heavy fighting, Japanese forces finally conquered the city. They then fought their way towards the capital, Nanking. When

Inukai Tsuyoshi was an important supporter of Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Chinese Republic, even offering him refuge in Japan at one stage. Despite growing differences between them in later years, Inukai maintained close personal ties with many leading Chinese politicians. However, he also criticized Japan's signing in 1930 of the London Naval Treaty, which reduced military spending, and supported the invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Nonetheless, his attempts as prime minister to rein in the military led to his assassination. This effectively marked the end of civilian control over the Japanese government until after World War II and the Allied occupation.

Photo: Moriyasu Murase

Left: A young Nanjing man about to be beheaded by a Japanese soldier, apparently after refusing to assist Japanese troops hunting for women. Right: The corpses of massacred victims on the shore of the Qinhuai River near Nanking.

that city fell in December 1937, Japanese troops massacred tens of thousands of people. The victims included both Chinese civilians and soldiers of the Chinese army who might have expected to be taken prisoner. Estimates of the number of those killed range from 40,000 to 300,000. There was also widespread rape, torture and looting. Until this point, Japanese military authorities had hoped to bring the conflict to a negotiated resolution. The massacre, however, strengthened Chiang's resolve not to negotiate and the conflict developed into a bitter war of attrition in which Japanese planes bombed Chinese cities and Japanese troops fought against both the KMT and the CCP. All sides used scorched earth tactics and intimidation against civilians, and the accumulated death toll among Chinese civilians has been estimated at 20 million. In 1938, for instance, 800,000 civilians perished when Chiang Kai-shek ordered the destruction of the Yellow River's dikes to stop the Japanese advance. By 1940, Japanese forces controlled much of the North China Plain, the lower valley of the Yangtze River and all of the key ports along China's southern coast, but it was unable to make headway in the interior, where the KMT government had retreated to Chungking. From there it strengthened its control in the northwest (Sinkiang) and benefited from trade with and assistance from the Soviets. In early September 1940, Japan expanded the war by occupying northern French Indochina in order to cut an important supply line to Chinese forces in the interior.

This Japanese action in Southeast Asia was also the consequence of important military and political changes in the Northeast Asia. Japanese military interests in Mongolia and Siberia clashed with Soviet interests. If Japan had succeeded in controlling these northern regions, not only would

it have limited Soviet influence further south, but also it would have gained access to Siberian resources for the growing war in China. The climax of the conflict was the Nomonhan War (also known as the Battles of Khalkh River), which broke out on the border between Manchukuo and the Mongolian People's Republic in May 1939. The Soviet–Mongolian force defeated the Japanese–Manchukuo army, which reportedly lost 45,000 dead and wounded. The conflict ended with Japan and the Soviet Union concluding a non-aggression pact in April 1941. This little-known war had a huge influence on later events; it marked not only Japan's first major defeat in its military history but also a turning point in Japanese strategy. With its defeat in the war, the Japanese government gave up the idea of striking north, the strategy favoured by the army, and shifted to support the navy's plans to expand into Southeast Asia. By this time, few voices in Tokyo openly opposed this expansionist policy, a strategy that also had the support of Emperor Hirohito.

Since the early 1930s, Japan's expansion in China had perturbed the United States, which was keen to keep the Open Door Policy of equal access to the Chinese market and had sympathy towards Chinese territorial integrity. Moreover, the Japanese attack on Nanking in late 1937 challenged the U.S. presence in the region, an American gunboat anchored in the Yangtze River outside Nanking being fired on and sunk by the Japanese. American properties in the city were looted by the invading Japanese and an American diplomat in Nanking was humiliated by a Japanese soldier. By 1939, U.S. policy turned decisively against Japan and in favour of the embattled Chinese government. The United States terminated its 1911 commercial treaty with Japan and began supplying equipment to China under generous Lend-Lease arrangements. In 1940, the American authorities began to restrict Japanese access to strategic imports and commenced clandestine military support for the Chinese. In response, in September 1940 Japan formed an alliance with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy (the Tripartite Pact, informally known as the Axis). In October 1940, the U.S. banned all exports of scrap iron, steel and copper to destinations other than Britain and the nations of the Western Hemisphere, thereby cutting Japan off from its main source of iron and copper. Then, in July 1941, after Japanese forces moved into southern Indochina with the acquiescence of Axis-aligned French colonial authorities, President Franklin D.

Japan's ambassador to Germany, Kurusu Saburō, shaking hands with Adolf Hitler after signing the Tripartite Pact in September 1940. He later became notorious as the Japanese diplomat who negotiated an improvement in U.S.–Japanese relations even as Japan was secretly preparing the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Roosevelt froze all Japanese assets in the United States, banned oil exports to Japan and closed the Panama Canal to Japanese shipping, demanding that Japan withdraw fully from China and Indochina.

In October 1941 General Tōjō Hideki became Japanese prime minister. Faced with a choice between a humiliating withdrawal and escalation of the conflict, unsurprisingly he agreed to a daring, desperate plan to seize the oil-producing regions of Southeast Asia and to disable U.S. military capacity long enough to consolidate control of the region and negotiate a settlement. On 8 December 1941 (7 December in the U.S.), Japanese forces simultaneously attacked British positions in Malaya and Hong Kong and U.S. positions in the Philippines, Guam and Hawaii (the naval base at Pearl Harbor). In a spectacularly successful military campaign, Japanese forces had conquered all of Southeast Asia by mid-1942. The attack left in place the non-aggression pact signed with the Soviet Union in April 1941; although the two powers remained rivals for hegemony in Northeast Asia, this pact enabled them to concentrate their forces against respectively the U.S. in the Pacific and Nazi Germany in Europe.

Japanese occupation transformed Southeast Asia politically and economically. Japan's rapid military victories humiliated the Western colonial powers. Japan had previously assailed the myth of unqualified Western superiority with its victory in the Russo–Japanese War, and this effect was now reinforced by the victories of 1941–42. Colonial armies surrendered and disappeared into prisoner-of-war

Courtesy of U.S. National Archives

An iconic image from World War II – the exploding of the USS *Shaw* during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

This Japanese leaflet from 1943 proclaims Japan's role as Asia's leader, breaking the chains of European domination and occupation.

camps, while colonial officials were removed from office and dispatched to internment camps. Colonial languages were banned in public and intense propaganda campaigns stressed Japan's claimed role as the leader and liberator of Asia. Southeast Asians, once accustomed to the grandiose pomposity of Western colonial administrators, now saw propaganda posters that mocked Western leaders as dithering incompetents. In both its achievements and its rhetoric, Japan encouraged colonized Asian peoples to believe they could achieve great things by their own efforts. The occupation played a major role in restoring Southeast Asians' confidence in their own potential. Japanese policies also directly developed Southeast Asian capacities. Local people filled posts vacated by colonial officials and the Japanese military recruited Southeast Asians into new armed forces.

In 1943, Japan began to promote independence and nationalism in Southeast Asia as part of its war-fighting strategy. Japanese authorities conferred formal independence on Burma and the Philippines, the two former colonies that had been furthest advanced along the path to self-rule. Neither state, however, was truly independent but rather had to accept Japanese instructions in any matter relating to war policy and foreign relations as well as economic relations with Japan. In March 1945, due to fears a Free French takeover in Indochina following the liberation of France, a Japanese *coup de force* led to similar 'independent' states being created in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Preparations also began for a similar state in Indonesia. This strategy built on earlier policies in China, where Japanese military forces had sought to strengthen support amongst Mongols by conferring autonomy on Mongol regions that had been forcibly included in Chinese provinces. It also reflected the Japanese strategy of seeking local allies who would

Another leaflet from 1943 urges Filipinos to strive for independence.

agree broadly with its anti-Western and anti-communist rhetoric. Japan's greatest coup in this strategy had been to recruit Wang Ching-wei, a former KMT leader and political rival of Chiang Kai-shek, to head what was called the Reorganized National Government of China. Based in Nanking from 1940, this government delivered military support to Japan against the KMT and CCP, as well as providing civil administration in Japanese-dominated regions.

At the same time, the occupation was economically catastrophic for Southeast Asia. In the Philippines, much destruction was caused by bombing and shelling. Manila was terribly devastated in February–March 1945 in a battle between U.S. and Japanese troops. Japanese occupation, moreover, cut the region off from its established markets and suppliers in the West. Southeast Asian rubber, sugar, coffee, tea, teak and a host of other products could be no longer sold to the West, nor could Western industrial goods be imported. However, operating under wartime demands, the Japanese economy could neither absorb Southeast Asia's products nor supply its needs. Living conditions thus declined across the region, especially after U.S. submarine operations in the South China Sea began to destroy Japanese shipping. By the end of the war, there was a critical shortage of cloth and metal goods throughout the region. Local military authorities introduced policies of economic self-sufficiency, requiring each region to produce all its own food and other needs. The policy made no allowance for local conditions such as drought or population numbers and it was disastrous in northern Vietnam and Java, where hundreds of thousands of people – probably well over a million in each case – perished in famines.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 111823

Starving women and children being treated at an Australian field hospital at Beaufort, Borneo, in July 1945.

Japanese occupation prompted local resistance. In Malaya, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) drew primarily on Chinese and communist antagonism towards Japan. The Left was also behind the Hukbalahap (*Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon*, National Anti-Japanese Army) in the Philippines and the Viet Minh in Vietnam. Despite its communist linkages, the Viet Minh, starting in mid-1945, received advice and logistical support from U.S. Special Forces who shared its enmity towards Japan and among key staff antagonism towards French colonialism. The Burma National Army under General Aung San, although sponsored by Japan as the armed forces of the client state of Burma, deserted to the Allied side in March

1945. Repression of these movements and of other manifestations of resistance was in the hands of the Japanese military police, the Kempeitai, and its lesser-known naval counterpart, the Tokkeitai.

Japan's advance in Southeast Asia and the Pacific had come to a halt by mid-1942. Thereafter, British forces faced the Japanese in a long, skirmish-ridden stalemate along the border between India and Burma until launching a counter-attack in late 1944 that led to the British recapture of the capital, Rangoon, in April 1945. American and Australian forces in the Pacific and New Guinea were able to push Japanese forces back from mid-1942, recovering island after island. With the capture of Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas in July–August 1944, the U.S. forces were able to send B-29 bombers against the Japanese mainland. The fire-bombing of Japanese cities commenced in March 1945 with an attack on Tokyo that killed 80,000 to 100,000 people. The bombing continued over following months, claiming an estimated 330,000 lives. In China, by contrast, Japanese forces held their ground and even gained territory in Operation Ichi-go in April–December 1944. The war theatre in central and southern China as well as in Southeast Asia, however, drew forces and military equipment from Manchukuo and northern China, leaving the north poorly defended.

By mid-1945, an Allied victory appeared inevitable, although Allied planners worried about potentially huge casualties in landing on and subduing the Japanese home islands. Following Germany's surrender in May 1945, moreover, Western concerns about rising Soviet power meant that the U.S. government no longer wished that the Soviet Union adhere to its earlier commitment to abrogate its non-aggression pact with Japan and to join the Pacific War within three months of the German surrender. The leaders of China, Britain and the United States thus issued a declaration at Potsdam on 26 July insisting on Japan's unconditional surrender and foreshadowing the military occupation of Japan, the trial of war criminals and the stripping from Japan of control of all its former colonies and outlying territories. When Japan ignored this ultimatum, desire to end the war quickly and to forestall a major Soviet role combined to underpin the U.S. decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August. Also on the 9th, a devastating Soviet attack on Manchukuo was quickly followed by the invasion of Japan's

A Japanese man amid the rubble and scorched wreckage that once was his home in Yokohama.

northern islands. Both the bombs and the Japanese government's own fear of possible occupation by the Soviet Union precipitated Japan's unconditional surrender on 15 August 1945.

This book seeks to encapsulate the changes that took place in Asia during the hundred days that followed the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. In the historical context of Japanese imperialism laid over a deeper history of Western colonialism, radical transformation was probably inevitable. From the distant perspective of 2015, it is easy to imagine that the course of events was driven by historical necessity. At the time, however, the region seemed to most people to be faced with a vast range of possibilities, amongst them the restoration of colonialism, the triumph of communism, a victory by local national forces, and an imminent Japanese resurgence. By tracing events from day to day over one hundred days, we seek to illuminate a sense of the uncertainty and lack of information that both leading players and ordinary people experienced during this time.

Note on spelling

As well as mapping events across the region as they occurred, this book seeks to evoke some of the atmosphere of the time. We have thus chosen to use the spelling of Asian personal and place names as they generally appeared in newspaper reports in 1945. This means that we have ignored the important spelling reforms that took place in Indonesia in 1947 and 1972, as well as changes in the preferred romanization of names in all languages. Readers will therefore find, for example, Mao Tse-tung appearing in the narrative, rather than Mao Zedong, and Chungking referred to rather than Chongqing. More common names are cross referenced in the Index.

Common acronyms

AFPFL Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (Burma)

BMA British Military Administration

BNA Burmese National Army

CCP Chinese Communist Party

CPKI Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence

DMH Vietnamese Revolutionary Alliance

DRV Democratic Republic of Vietnam

GHQ General Headquarters

ICP Indochinese Communist Party

KMT Kuomintong

NICA Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs

MCP Malayan Communist Party

MPAJA Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army

MPR Mongolian People's Republic

OSS [U.S.] Office of Strategic Services

PBF Patriotic Burma Forces

Peta Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the [Indonesian] Homeland)

PPKI Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (Indonesian Independence Preparatory Committee)

POW Prisoner of war

RAPWI Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees

SEAC South East Asia Command

VNQDD Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (Vietnamese Nationalist Party)

Prelude

It was a hot day on Tinian in the Northern Mariana Islands, and loading Little Boy was delicate work. The world's first atomic bomb used in war was over three meters (ten feet) long and weighted nearly 4.5 tonnes. And although the B29 Superfortress bomber's bomb bay had been modified, it was still a tight fit. Preparing the massive bomb and manoeuvring it into the aircraft took several hours that afternoon on 5 August 1945.

As for the B29, it had never been named by its regular pilot, Captain Robert A. Lewis. This was rectified that afternoon by the commander of the atomic strike force, Colonel Paul W. Tibbets, who was also assuming command of the bomber for the attack on Hiroshima; Lewis would fly as co-pilot. Remembering his mother, who had assured him he would never be killed flying, Tibbets ordered that her given names, Enola Gay, be painted on the aircraft nose below the pilot's window. When Lewis inspected the B29 late that afternoon, he was furious. 'What the hell is *that* doing on *my* plane?' he shouted. Despite a confrontation with Tibbets, the writing remained on the bomber and became a part of history.

Thus begins the 100-day period from 5 August to 12 November 1945 covered by this volume. But although the destruction of Hiroshima and other events recounted were framed by the war and its aftermath, they only make sense when their backstory is told. This is our purpose in the next few pages.

Courtesy of U.S. National Archives

Little Boy in its trailer cradle before being loaded into the *Enola Gay*'s bomb bay.

Japan

Less than a century elapsed between the arrival of U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry in Tokyo Bay in 1853 and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. During these nine decades, Japan underwent

a swift political and social transformation. The country changed from a pre-modern society under Shogun military rule to a modern industrialized state that became first a significant colonial power and then a contender with the U.S. for East Asian hegemony, before collapsing into ashes. Having been forced by the United States to open up for trade, Japan concluded unequal treaties with the Western powers in the 1850s.

To be equal with the West, the new Meiji government adopted Western political and legal systems, as well as technology; the country then industrialized rapidly. Military conscription was introduced and samurai warriors became modern soldiers under a centralized system, while samurai lords were transformed into government officials and ministers. Japan proclaimed its first constitution in 1889, which established a constitutional monarchy based on the Prussian model. The emperor was presented as the ultimate source of sovereignty, but some provisions were vague and contradictory regarding whether the constitution or the emperor was supreme. A Diet was created with an elected lower house; the prime minister and cabinet, on the other hand, were appointed by the emperor. The Imperial General Staff Headquarters had direct access to the Emperor, bypassing the government. Western powers finally recognized Japan's emergence as a modern state and agreed to revise the unequal treaties in 1894, but still not as an equal power. Japan's victory in 1895 in its war with China changed this view. As a result of the war, China's sovereignty over Korea was removed and Japan not only expanded its influence there, but also gained Taiwan as a colony.

Japanese troops enter Mukden, 1931.

Japan's military prestige increased further with its military defeat of Russia in 1905. This conflict was the first modern war won by an Asian power against a Western power. Many Asians subsequently looked up to Japan as a model of modernization and Japan presented itself as Asia's leader. After formally annexing Korea in 1910, Japan extended its interests into Manchuria and Mongolia, confirming its sphere of influence in southern Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia through the Twenty-One Demands to China in 1915. As Japanese citizens and businesses established themselves in Manchuria, conflicts with local people increased. The Kwantung Army stationed in southern Manchuria staged an incident at Mukden and moved quickly to occupy the entire region in September 1931. Six months later, it set up a new client state called Manchukuo. Although the Japanese government in Tokyo tried to prevent the Kwantung Army's expansion, the Army ignored its own government. The Kwantung Army's engagements received considerable popular support in Japan.

Meanwhile, the Japanese system of party government was under attack from right-wing and militarist forces, and its strength declined sharply after the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi in 1932. Inukai's successors recognized Manchukuo and retrospectively approved the Kwantung Army's actions. Internal violence continued to beset civilian government and the military increasingly took the upper hand in the government, while initiating a full-scale war against China in 1937. Soon afterwards, the Imperial General Staff Headquarters became the command authority over all military operations, pushing the government aside in matters of war. The national government was powerless to prevent or punish atrocities such as the Nanking Massacre of late 1937.

Indeed, the victories of the Japanese army in China created euphoria in Japan and increased the confidence of hard-line militarists and nationalists alike. The Japanese government thus demanded more from China and pressed Chiang Kai-shek's government in Chungking to recognize Manchukuo and to accept Japan's position in northern China where the Japanese army had set up several client governments (including the Peking Provisional Government). Japan also pushed for closer Sino–Japanese economic cooperation. When Chiang Kai-shek's government refused to accept anything less than a Japanese withdrawal, the Japanese military set up an alternative Chinese government headed by Wang Ching-wei in Nanking in 1940. The prolonged war in China drained Japanese resources.

The outbreak of the war in Europe in 1939 and Japan's conclusion of the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union in early 1941 seemed to provide favourable conditions for Japanese forces to advance into Southeast Asia. In 1940, in order to cut supply lines of the Chiang government, Japanese forces moved into French Indochina. This action prompted Britain and United States to place embargoes on Japan for trade including oil and steel, which were crucial for the Japanese navy and military industry more generally. With only 18 months of fuel oil reserves, the Japanese government chose the bold step of launching an attack to seize oil-producing regions in the Netherlands Indies and Burma. This plan required a pre-emptive attack on the U.S. navy at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and

Japan Times & Advertiser

EVENING EDITION

No. 15,529 (THE 16th YEAR of SHOWA) TOKYO, MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1941 Price 6 Sen

WAR IS ON!

JAPAN'S NAVY PLANES ATTACK HAWAII, SINGAPORE, DAVAO, WAKE, GUAM ISLES

Japanese Troop Transport Off Pearl Harbor—Honolulu Now in Midst of Terrific Bomb Attack

AMERICAN ARMY SHIP REPORTED SUNK

PREMIER DEDICATES UTMOST TO WAR AIM

Broadcasts Reply to Imperial Rescript Over Nationwide Radio Network

NOW DELUGED TO FIGHT

Imperial Rescript

GREAT SUCCESSES REPORTED IN ALL AREAS RAIDED IN NAVAL ANNOUNCEMENT

BRITISH TROOPS IN THAILAND BEING WIPED OUT

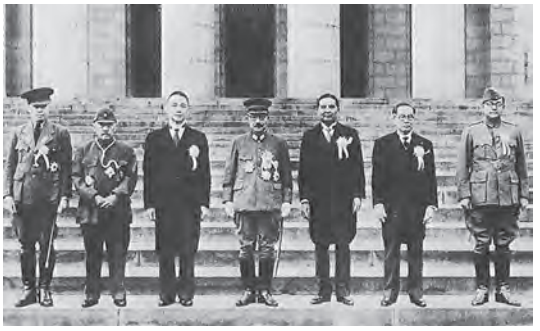
Hongkong Heavily Bombed by Navy—Landing in Malaya Announced—Cabinet Meeting in Emergency Session

The outbreak of war as reported from Tokyo. The English-language *Japan Times & Advertiser* was one of the largest newspapers in Japan both before and after the war. It lives on today as the *Japan Times*.

on British positions in Malaya. In December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and British colonies, the International Settlement in Shanghai, the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia. Japanese military leaders hoped that a short and successful attack and U.S. defeat would lead to a negotiation that not only ensured Japan's access to natural resources but also consolidated Japan's position in China.

In seizing the Western colonies in Southeast Asia, Japan employed the slogan of liberating Asians from Western colonialism and building a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. The idea emphasized the economic interdependency of Asia, suggesting that the region would prosper by cutting its ties with Europe and the United States.

In the closing months of the war, while the Japanese military was fighting hopeless battles in Asia and the Pacific, the Japanese government tried to persuade the Soviet Union to broker an end to hostilities. The Soviets, however, had their own ambitions in Asia and, in any case, had agreed to enter the war against Japan within three months of Germany's defeat. For several months they stalled the Japanese while preparing for war. Finally, on 8 August, they declared war on Japan, attacking a few hours later – and far sooner than Tokyo had expected.



In 1943, a summit of leaders from the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' was held in Tokyo. From left: Ba Maw (Burma), Chang Ching-hui (Manchuoko), Wang Ching-wei (China, Nanking regime), Tōjō Hideki (Japan), Wan Waithayakon (Thailand), José P. Laurel (Philippines), and Subhas Chandra Bose (Indian National Army)

Korea

In 1800, Korea was a tributary state of Ching China but a self-governing independent kingdom in all practical respects. Its tributary status enabled it to avoid contact with Western powers and to maintain a form of national seclusion similar to Japan's. Nevertheless, whereas Japan's enforced opening in the mid-19th century unleashed social forces that led to rapid modernization, reforms in Korea were slower to start and less enthusiastically pursued. As early as the 1870s, Japanese planners began to regard Korea as a potential sphere of influence or even colony, and worked to detach it from its formal subordination to the Ching. They achieved this goal in the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, after China's defeat in the First Sino–Japanese War (1894–95), which was fought partly on Korean soil. The government of the newly independent state reconfigured the kingdom as an empire and embarked on an ambitious series of reforms encompassing the military, the economy, the education system, land ownership, industry and the legal system. These reforms, however, came too late to strengthen Korea sufficiently to avoid competition for hegemony over the peninsula between Russia and Japan.

Following Japan's victory in the Russo–Japanese War (1904–05) and with the re-

cent example of the United States' annexation of the Philippines in 1898 in the teeth of nationalist resistance, Japanese authorities felt that they had a free hand in Korea. Many Japanese leaders believed that Japan could be a great power only if it had colonies like the western powers. With fertile soil, natural resources and an undeveloped economy, Korea was an attractive prize. In 1905, Japan forced on Korea a treaty that surrendered Korean sovereignty and made the country a Japanese protectorate. The Korean emperor appealed to the Western powers against this treaty but was ignored. A further treaty in 1907 placed the Korean government under the authority of a Japanese resident-general. This post was taken by Itō Hirobumi, who had been Japan's first prime minister and one of the principal architects of Japan's modernization. Finally, in 1910, Japan formally annexed Korea, the Korean monarchy was abolished and the peninsula came under the rule of a Japanese Governor-General, Terauchi Masatake.

Japan's colonial policy in Korea was ambivalent. On the one hand, the country received extensive investment in infrastructure and education. Land reform greatly reduced the power of the *yangban*, Korea's traditional aristocracy, and benefitted peasant cultivators. On the other hand, Koreans were to be assimilated as Japanese. They were encouraged to take Japanese names and the use of Korean in public life was heavily restricted. Japanese migrants began to settle in Korea and to acquire land. It has been estimated that, by 1932, Japanese settlers and companies owned more than half the country's arable land. Many Koreans migrated to Manchuria, where they themselves became part of the colonial elite. Despite assimilation, Koreans were still treated as an inferior race. They were not trusted in the Japanese armed forces, though in 1944 Japan's declining fortunes in the Second World War led the country's leadership to begin conscripting Koreans. A reported five million Korean men were recruited as labourers and were set to work in harsh conditions on Japanese military projects. In addition, large numbers of Korean girls and young women were lured into service as military prostitutes – the so-called 'comfort women' (see p. 92).

Koreans were not conscripted into the Japanese Army until 1944 but an increasing number of volunteers did enlist. Despite pervasive discrimination against Korean recruits, a large number of them achieved high military rank. Of note were three princes from the deposed Korean imperial family (pictured above) and Park Chung-hee, whose 18-year authoritarian rule later transformed South Korea.

After annexing Korea in 1910, the colonial administration faced strong resistance in the countryside from so-called 'right-

eous armies'. The end of the First World War and U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's promise of national self-determination raised hopes among Koreans for the recovery of national independence, and massive crowds demonstrated around the country on 1 March 1919. Exiled nationalists formed a Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea in Shanghai after the suppression of these demonstrations. This government in exile later moved to Chungking with the retreating government of the Republic of China. Korean guerrilla armies in Manchuria fought the Japanese forces there from the 1930s. A cross-border raid by one of these groups brought brief fame to the future North Korean leader, Kim Il-sung.

Manchuria

Ching emperors called Manchuria home. After the Ching capital moved to Peking in 1644, however, the region gradually turned into a frontier zone. It maintained its own administrative system, different from that of the provincial system of China proper. From the mid-19th century, Tsarist Russia expanded southwards and forced the Ching to cede the region north of the Amur and east of the Ussuri River. Fearing further Russian advances, the Ching court lifted its migration ban and actively encouraged (Han) Chinese migration and settlement into the region. The Russo–Japanese War in 1904–05 was partly fought on Manchurian soil and, in its aftermath, Japan replaced Russia as leaseholder of the Kwantung Peninsula as well as gaining extraterritoriality along the South Manchurian Railway. Threatened by both Russia and Japan, the Ching court replaced Manchuria's old administrative system with the Chinese provincial system in 1907.

After the fall of the Ching dynasty in 1911, the region was ruled by warlords. By 1920, Manchuria was under the sole control of Chang Tso-lin. One of China's most powerful warlords, he took over Peking in 1926, only to be ousted by the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) two years later. Japan had a great interest in Manchuria as an outlet for its overpopulation, the region being often referred to as Japan's 'lifeline' in the 1920s. In 1928, Chang was assassinated by a Japanese officer. His son, Chang Hsueh-liang, succeeded him and declared his allegiance to the KMT.

The Japanese Kwantung Army clashed with Chang Hsueh-liang's army and subsequently invaded Manchuria in September 1931. Chang ordered his army to withdraw from Manchuria without much of a fight because he knew that it would be overpowered. Chiang Kai-shek also suggested that the Chinese national army be strengthened before initiating a full-scale war against Japan.

The Kwantung Army created Manchukuo, a new state including the eastern part of Inner Mongolia, and installed the last Ching emperor, Puyi, as head of state. Manchukuo was presented as an independent state and had diplomatic relationships with several countries. The Japanese, however, controlled the state. Japanese authorities promoted Japanese settlement in Manchukuo and about 380,000 farmers and their families settled there, causing tensions between the new-

1930s poster extolling the virtues of Manchukuo to poor Japanese peasants.

comers and the local farmers. The Manchukuo government increased land cultivation for agriculture, engaged in massive industrialization and built an efficient rail transport network.

Manchukuo was also a base for Japan's potential northwards expansion. There were several border incidents between the new state and the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) in the north, leading to the Nomonhan War in 1939. Hostilities between the Soviet–MPR army and Manchukuo–Japanese army ended in 1941, when Japan and the USSR signed a non-aggression pact. This pact not only enabled Stalin to redirect his full army to his western front, influencing the outcome of the war in Europe, but it also had a great impact on Japanese strategy; this now shifted towards Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The Japanese authorities were caught by surprise when the Soviet army entered the war on 9 August 1945, seven months before expiry of the non-aggression pact. At the end of the war, there were over three million Japanese living in Manchukuo, mainly civilians because most divisions of the Kwantung Army had been deployed to war fronts in Southeast Asia and China.

Mongolia

What are now Mongolia and China were components of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) founded by Khubilai Khan. After the collapse of Yuan rule, the Chinese Ming dynasty took over the territory south of the Great Wall and the Mongols retreated to the north. In 17th century, the Manchus collaborated with the Mongols to bring the Ching dynasty to power. Manchu emperors presented themselves as the legitimate successors of the Mongol Khans. Territorially, the Ching occupied much of the same territory as the Mongol Yuan dynasty.

Under the Ching, the Mongols were ruled separately from China, as were the Tibetans and Uighurs. Chinese migration into the Mongol region and intermarriage with Mongols were prohibited. But, due to periodic famine in northern China, Chinese migration still took place and, over time, large areas of Mongol pastoral land came under cultivation by Chinese farmers. In practice, a distinction emerged between Inner Mongolia, close to China, and Outer Mongolia, which lay beyond the Gobi Desert. Chinese settlers were more

The last Khagan of Mongolia was born in Tibet. As the 8th Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the Bogd Khan was the spiritual leader of Mongolian Buddhism and the third most important person in the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy after the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.

numerous in Inner Mongolia and the region's administration was more closely supervised by Manchu authorities in Peking. In 1911, when the Ching dynasty had begun to crumble but the Chinese Republic had not yet been declared, Mongol leaders in Outer Mongolia declared independence and Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, Mongolia's religious leader, was named Bogd Khan (head of state). He called for the establishment of a Greater Mongolia that included Inner Mongolia. Thousands of Inner Mongols moved northward and some of them received high-ranking positions in the new Mongolian government. The new government even tried to conquer Inner Mongolia by force, but failed due to the lack of military supplies.

The new Republic of China claimed that it was the legal successor to the Manchus and had sovereignty over all territory formerly subordinate to the Manchus, hence refusing to recognize Mongolian independence. The Bogd Khan objected; without Manchu emperors, he said, the two peoples should go their separate ways. Mongolia sought Russian support, but Saint Petersburg did not take the Mongolian request seriously and even prevented Mongolia from appealing to the international community. Russia did, however, agree to provide weapons, loans and military training to Mongolia in exchange for Russian commercial privileges there. Even so, Russia and China made a joint declaration that Mongolia was a sovereign part of China but retained regional autonomy. From the Mongolian point of view, this condition was unacceptable. Nonetheless, the Sino–Russian agreement was confirmed by the tripartite Treaty of Kyakhta, signed by China, Russia and Mongolia in 1915. This treaty not only curtailed Mongolia's independent status but also left Inner Mongolia as part of the Chinese Republic.

In 1919, using the Russian Revolution as a pretext, China deployed its army to Mongolia to 'protect' Mongols from Bolsheviks and claimed direct authority over the territory. In 1921, Outer Mongolian nationalists drove the Chinese garrison out and once again declared the country's independence. With Soviet backing, they proclaimed the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) three years later. Although

formally independent, the MPR was largely unrecognized internationally and was heavily dominated by the Soviet Union. In the early 1930s, the communist party introduced the collectivization of herds and began to suppress Buddhism. From 1936, the country was dominated by Marshal Choibalsan, who presided over a Red Terror against the Buddhist clergy.

Meanwhile, Inner Mongolia was confined within the Chinese Republican framework. To undercut the Pan-Mongol movement and to keep Inner Mongolia within their territory, Chinese leaders presented a vision of China as a confederation of nationalities, each with a degree of autonomy similar to that of the former Manchu system. The ruling power of the Mongolian princes and succession of hereditary titles and ranks would continue as before. This proposal, coupled with a threat of military intervention if Mongols did not comply, persuaded Inner Mongols to accept the Republic's terms. After the rise of the Kuomintang in 1928, the Republican government incorporated Inner Mongolia into Chinese provinces under Peking's authority. On the eve of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, Mongols were negotiating with the KMT government for autonomy but concessions from the Chinese were not forthcoming.

In these circumstances, with Mongols facing repression in both Outer and Inner Mongolia, Japan became more and more attractive as a potential sponsor of national self-determination. In 1931, Japan's Kwantung Army incorporated the eastern part of Inner Mongolia into Manchukuo. With Japanese support and encouragement, the western part of Inner Mongolia declared its autonomy under De Wang in 1933. He set up a military government in 1936 and proclaimed a *Mongol Ulus* (Mongol domain or 'state') in 1942 (see p. 125). Successive governments focused on the autonomy, independence and re-unification of western and eastern Inner Mongolia in the short term, but the long-term goal was a unified state including Outer Mongolia and perhaps even Buryatia, then part of the Soviet Union. To the north in the MPR, Choibalsan was lobbying Stalin for a unified Mongol state, too, even before the Yalta conference. The Mongol unification dream suddenly appeared to be plausible when the Soviets prepared for their onslaught against Japan. On 16 July 1945, the MPR and Soviet Union set up a joint headquarters, with Choibalsan as commander. A joint Soviet–Mongolian army crossed into Inner Mongolia and Manchuria in August 1945, for which assistance Choibalsan expected a post-war territorial reward.

China

At the beginning of the 19th century, China had been a peaceful and prosperous component of the extensive Manchu empire. Descendants of warriors from the Manchurian plain northeast of China, the Manchus had swept away the Ming Dynasty in 1644 and had subsequently extended their rule over Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet. China, which they ruled as the Ching Dynasty, comprised barely half the territory of the Manchu empire, though it was by far the most populous and prosperous segment. The 19th century, however,

proved to be miserable both for the Manchus and for China. Western imperial expansion pushed back the imperial borders created a few decades earlier by Manchu armies, China's growing integration into the world economy made it increasingly vulnerable to economic fluctuations and their sometimes disastrous consequences, and discontent was growing within China over rule by foreigners from the north. The anti-Ching Taiping Rebellion (1850–64) cost an estimated 20 million lives and irretrievably damaged the social and economic fabric of the country. The scale and pace of Western intervention in Chinese affairs grew with the establishment of 'treaty ports', cities in the interior as well as on the coast in which Westerners had rights of residence and trade and where Western powers eventually established semi-colonial administrations with their own courts, police forces, post offices and comfortable residential enclaves.

'China – the cake of kings and ... of emperors'. French political cartoon from 1898.

Many Chinese intellectuals realized the need for reform, but the scale of the problems was such that every reformist step seemed to threaten catastrophic consequences for some element of the Ching imperial order. In the end, the imperial regime was overthrown in 1911 in a revolution inspired by the nationalist leader Sun Yat-sen, who became president of the new Republic of China. Revolution produced neither peace nor progress, however, and the country soon fell apart into domains ruled by rival warlords.

In this tumultuous environment, Japan was both a model and a menace. Japan's success in resisting Western imperialism and in embarking upon industrialization was an inspiration throughout Asia – and especially in China, whose people recognized Japan's strong cultural roots in Chinese civilization. The Japanese model of authoritarian modernization, which appropriated Western economic innovations without fully accepting Western political ideas or culture, appeared to many Chinese intellectuals to be the recipe that China needed to recover national dignity and prosperity.

At the same time, Japan was a threat. In 1895, the Ching fought and lost a war with Japan resulting in the transfer of Taiwan to Japanese sovereignty. In 1905, after defeating Russia, Japan obtained control over the Kwantung Leased Territory, a strategically located peninsula in the

south of Manchuria, as well as extraterritorial rights along a railway that extended more than 800 kilometres into the interior of Manchuria. In 1914, Japan took over the former German colony of Tsingtao and in 1915 presented the fledgling Republican government with twenty-one demands that would have established Japanese hegemony over Manchuria as well as greatly strengthening Japanese influence in the Chinese economy. The Chinese hoped that the Japanese demands would be withdrawn after Western intervention at the Paris Peace Conference. However, with the Western powers busy with their own interests, the Chinese government was unable to achieve anything at the peace conference.

Chinese intellectuals, especially students, were outraged with the outcome that awarded German rights in Shantung Province to Japan. Protests in Peking against the government's acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 spread quickly to other big cities in the country, becoming a huge nation-wide demonstration. The protestors called for an end to Japan's twenty-one demands, the return of Shantung, and a boycott of Japanese goods. Eventually, Western powers blocked the most far-reaching of these demands and, in 1922, Japan was forced to return Tsingtao to China, yet Japan continued to seek political and economic advantage in Manchuria.

During the 1920s, Sun Yat-sen's party, the Kuomintang, began to develop a disciplined structure, partly modelling itself on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It established control over much

KMT execution squad beheading a captive during the violent suppression of communist organizations in Shanghai in 1927.

of southern China and, in the late 1920s under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, began to reconquer the north from various warlords. It faced numerous rebellions and resistance movements, especially from non-Chinese ethnic groups unhappy with the preference given by the KMT to (ethnic) Han Chinese. The party also came into sharp conflict with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), soon to come under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung. KMT forces massacred 5,000 CCP members in Shanghai in 1927, an event that is sometimes identified as the start of the Chinese Civil War. Several years of communist-led rural insurrection followed. In late 1934, as KMT forces finally closed in on the Chinese Soviet Republic in the eastern province of Chiang-hsi (Jiangxi), Mao's Red Army undertook a year-long, fighting retreat to the far northwest. Communist forces continued to be active in many regions, however.

Meanwhile, in 1931 Japan's Kwantung Army, based in the Leased Territory, manufactured a pretext to invade Manchuria

and created the client state of Manchukuo there in the following year. Both in the north and around Shanghai, Japanese military forces provoked incidents that enabled them to expand their power incrementally. In 1936, this growing encroachment by Japan prompted the former Manchurian warlord, Chang Hsueh-liang, to mediate an agreement between Chiang and Mao to join forces against Japan. Accordingly, KMT armies fought back when, in 1937, Japanese legation forces that has been stationed in Peiping under the Boxer Protocol since 1902 provoked a battle south of the city (Peking was renamed Peiping after the Republic's capital was moved to Nanking in 1927). Fighting escalated into full-scale war, culminating in the Japanese capture of Shanghai, Nanking and Wuhan. At the end of 1938, the Republic's capital moved to the southwestern city of Chungking. Japanese aircraft bombed the new capital but their forces were unable to break through the mountains and capture it. In the meantime, relations between the KMT and CCP forces deteriorated and from January 1941 the civil war resumed. The Republican government depended on supplies from the West sent first through French Indochina and Yunnan and later along the Burma Road, a narrow, winding track leading into China from India. Supplies also arrived from the Soviet Union via Sinkiang.

Courtesy of the U.S. National Archives

Some of the 4,000 people killed in a mass panic during a Japanese air raid on Chungking in June 1941.

Taiwan

Until the 17th century, the island of Taiwan was mainly inhabited by aboriginal peoples closely related to the indigenous people of the Philippines. The Dutch East India Company established a settlement in the south in 1624 and gradually extended a loose hegemony over the whole island, which they called Formosa (from the Portuguese, meaning 'beautiful'). In 1662, they were displaced by a Chinese general called Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong), who professed loyalty to the displaced Ming Dynasty in China. Koxinga's dynasty was conquered in turn by Manchu Ching forces after about 20 years, and the island was incorporated into neighbouring Fujian province.

Until the second half of the 19th century, Ching rule over the island was loose. Aborigines were largely in control of the eastern, mountainous region, and the Ching authorities disclaimed responsibil-

ity for aborigines' plundering of foreign ships visiting or stranded on the eastern coast. Chinese settlements on the western plains were controlled by powerful local families rather than Ching administrators. During two centuries of Ching authority, 159 significant rebellions were reported. Only with the growing realization that the island might be seized by outsiders did the Ching authorities encourage Chinese settlement, Chinese settlers outnumbering aborigines by the 1860s. From about 1870, Ching authorities began export-oriented development on Taiwan, which became a major centre for rice, tea, sugar and camphor production. In 1885, after an unsuccessful French attempt to seize the island, the Ching authorities declared it a province in its own right. Nonetheless, it was still considered an unruly frontier zone when Japan took sovereignty over the province under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed to conclude the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–95.

Chinese Taiwanese initially resisted the island's transfer to Japan, declaring a Taiwanese Republic. This professed loyalty to the Ching, however, and was quickly swept away by Japanese military forces, though guerrilla resistance continued until 1902. About one quarter of the Chinese population accepted the invitation of the Japanese authorities to leave the island if they were unwilling to become Japanese subjects; this measure removed a major potential source of resistance.

Taiwan was Japan's first formal colony and Japanese authorities aimed to create a model colonial administration. Opium consumption and foot-binding were prohibited. The Japanese government invested significant amounts in infrastructure, including road, health, irrigation and education, and instituted a land reform programme that largely removed absentee landlords. They also took some steps to include the Taiwanese elite in political decision-making. In 1935, half the seats in provincial and local assemblies in Taiwan were chosen by election, though the franchise was restricted to educated, male property-holders. Metropolitan authorities also promoted Japanese settlement on the island and, by 1938, the Japanese population was around 300,000. Colonial policy-makers were perennially divided over the question of whether the Taiwanese could eventually be fully assimilated to Japanese culture or if they would always remain in some respects colonial subjects. The Japanese authorities maintained control by means of a highly developed system of local policing.

Assimilation policy was pursued more aggressively after the outbreak of the Second Sino–Japanese war in 1937. Chinese-language newspapers were banned and Chinese-language instruction in schools was reduced. The island was increasingly developed for heavy industry to support the war effort, and 200,000 Taiwanese men were recruited into the Japanese Imperial Army. From 1942 they were posted to combat positions. In November 1943, the Allies' Cairo Declaration included the statement that 'all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, including Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China'.

Indochina

France created the colony of Indochina between 1858 and 1909 in a series of conquests and annexations that encompassed Vietnam, Cambodia and a disparate group of tributary states in the Thai cultural world that were bundled together as Laos. Vietnam itself was divided into three zones: Cochinchina, including the commercial capital, Saigon, was a directly ruled colony, while Annam and Tonkin were nominally protectorates in which the Vietnamese emperor at Hue ruled following French 'advice'. In practice, the Governor-General in Hanoi had supreme authority in all three regions. French rule almost certainly ensured the survival of Cambodia. When the French authorities established a protectorate over the kingdom in 1867, it was tributary to both Siam and Vietnam and had lost significant territory to both neighbours; extinction appeared to be imminent. The Cambodian elite welcomed French rule not only because of this protection, but also because the colonial power had few economic interests in Cambodia that might have disrupted the traditional order.

The French authorities in Vietnam were primarily interested in the colony as a source of plantation produce. They ruthlessly recruited labour for this task and brutally suppressed several insurrections. French economic development projects also created transport, communication and administrative networks that knitted together the wider Indochinese region. They also saw themselves as having a *mission civilisatrice*. To some extent, the French fostered education among their colonial subjects, founding a university in Hanoi in 1906 and establishing a Franco–native school system by the 1920s. Here, the focus was on Vietnamese education – the first *lycées* (high schools) in Cambodia were only established in the 1930s; Laos had none. Some Vietnamese nationalists and the French administration promoted the use of a form of Roman script, developed by French missionaries and adapted to Vietnamese pronunciation (*quoc ngu*), which was much easier to learn than the traditional script based on Chinese characters. Among the consequences of this educational expansion was the rise of an educated class open to foreign ideas, including nationalism and Marxism. The leading nationalist organization, the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang, was directly modelled on China's Kuomintang.

Cover of a school notebook by G. Daschner from c. 1900 visualizing France's *mission civilisatrice* in all of its possessions.

After France was defeated in Europe in 1940, the colonial authorities in Indochina affiliated with so-called Vichy France, the puppet regime established in southern France under Nazi auspices. Japan had not yet signed the Tripartite Alliance that created the so-called Axis with Germany and Italy; the Vichy colonial authorities thus refused Japan's request to block the shipment of Allied supplies through Hanoi and Yunnan to the embattled Kuomintang authorities in China's interior. On 22 September 1940, however, under threat of Japanese invasion, they agreed to Japan stationing troops in Indochina. Five days later, the Tripartite Alliance was signed, effectively making the colonial authorities allies of Japan, though a formal agreement was not signed until July 1941. Thereafter, French colonial authority remained formally intact throughout Indochina, while Japanese forces in practice moved freely throughout the territory. The Japanese force that attacked Malaya in December 1941 departed from southern Vietnam.

In most of Southeast Asia, Japan was the enemy of the Western colonial powers and local nationalists had to choose which of the two to regard as their greatest danger or best patron. In Indochina, Japanese and Europeans were aligned, albeit uncomfortably, and theoretically nationalists could fight both at the same time (though they never did). In these circumstances, the communist leader Ho Chi Minh was able to create the Viet Minh (Vietnam Independence League) as a broad coalition of nationalist forces, though it was no match for effective French suppression. On 9 March 1945, the situation changed dramatically as a consequence of the liberation of France. Fearing a Free French takeover in Indochina and possible Allied landings, the Japanese abruptly disarmed and interned the French. In just a few hours, the Vichy French colonial regime was brought to an end and Japan offered immediate independence to the monarchies of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Two days later, emperor Bao Dai declared the independence of Vietnam. The following day, Cambodia's young king Norodom Sihanouk declared himself leader of the renamed kingdom of Kampuchea. Only in April, under Japanese duress, did King Sisavangvong declare that Laos was no longer a French protectorate. In these chaotic conditions, the Viet Minh began to grow in strength. After the middle of 1945, their operations received moral support from U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) agents working in Indochina.

During the following months, the fortunes of the three future countries diverged. In Vietnam, Bao Dai had difficulty shedding his reputation as a king who reigned but did not govern, and his administration lacked both credibility and the capacity to impose its authority over the provinces. Moreover, the new regime was confronted with a cataclysmic famine in the north that provided Viet Minh leaders with the opportunity to build a mass movement of political and social salvation in the countryside. Meanwhile, in Kampuchea, a pro-Japanese nationalist Son Ngoc Thanh was flown home from Japan and named foreign minister in May;

his most important task was to ensure good relations between the kingdom and Japanese authorities. The country also saw the formation of the Green Shirts, a ragtag nationalist militia aligned with the Japanese. In Laos, despite the reluctance of their king to embrace independence, the hopes of nationalists had been stirred earlier by the French belatedly bringing much of the country under the administrative control the kingdom of Luang Prabang and instituting a ministerial system of government headed by Prince Phetsarath. The first Lao independence movement, the Lao-pen-Lao ('Laos for the Lao'), was launched in May.

Thailand

As Siam, Thailand had been one of the great powers of mainland Southeast Asia in the pre-colonial period. Unlike its neighbours, it was able to stave off direct European colonization, though at the cost of surrendering to Britain and France its claims over several outlying territories. Other than Japan, Thailand was the only Asian country that successfully defended itself against Western colonial conquest, though its economy became much more heavily dominated by Western interests than did Japan's. In 1932, young military officers overthrew the royal absolutist government. Decades of unsettled political conditions followed as royalists, democrats and other factions struggled with one another.

In 1939, Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram (generally known as Phibun) renamed the country Thailand and, in October 1940, sent the Thai army into French Indochina to reclaim territory lost to France earlier in the century. Japan imposed a ceasefire in January 1941 and a peace treaty in May under which the French colonial authorities ceded most of the disputed territories to Thailand. Japanese troops invaded Thailand just before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Thai forces offered only brief resistance and Phibun signed a military alliance with Japan two weeks later, declaring war on the Allies at the same time. Japan subsequently rewarded Thailand with the return of 'lost territories' at the expense of British Malaya and Burma.

Like the rest of Southeast Asia, Thailand suffered badly from economic dislocation during the war. An added burden was the Thailand–Burma Railway, constructed under Japanese direction in 1943 to provide a supply line to its forces in Burma. Working in appalling conditions, thousands of Thai labourers joined a host of others recruited throughout Southeast Asia, along with thousands of Allied prisoners of war, to build this so-called 'Death Railroad'.

Courtesy Aust. War Memorial, P00761.027

Wooden bridge spanning what became called the Kwai Yai River in western Thailand. The railway was a major feat of Japanese engineering, though achieved at appalling human cost.

Even though Thailand was formally a Japanese ally, the Thai ambassador to the United States pursued a markedly different strategy in Washington, refusing to deliver Phibun's declaration of war and establishing a Free Thai movement. This movement was actively supported by the United States, which never acknowledged Thailand's declaration of war. In 1945, as the Allies prepared to move against Thailand, Free Thai forces began clandestine operations inside the country in preparation for the coming invasion. This was done with the full awareness of Prime Minister Khuang Aphaiwong, who succeeded Phibun after he was forced from office in 1944. Delicately, Khuang also had to keep his Japanese partners unaware of the situation. The country's powerful Regent, Pridi Phanomyong, had a leading role in the movement.

Little more than a decade before the Japanese invasion, British rule in Burma was shaken by a major Burmese peasant revolt led by Saya San, a noted monk, shaman and pretender to the Burmese throne. The 'Galon King' was commemorated on this 90 Kyat banknote from 1987.

Burma

Britain conquered Burma in three wars during the 19th century, defeating a Burmese empire that had not long previously been at the height of its powers. The Burmese king was exiled to India. The new territory was included in the British Indian Empire as two distinct zones: so-called Ministerial Burma (Burma proper) under a Lieutenant-Governor, and three Scheduled or Frontier Areas in the surrounding hill country, covering the lands of the Shan, Chin and Kachin ethnic groups as well as many Karen. These areas were separately ruled by the Burma Frontier Service. The population of Ministerial Burma was predominantly ethnic Burmese, but there were significant minorities, especially the Karen and the Mon, as well as Indian immigrants and an influential Anglo–Burmese elite. Partly because of enduring Burmese resistance to British rule, the colonial system gave relatively little political role to indigenous Burmese. Members of selected minority groups dominated administration, policing and the modern economy. Largely as a result of British agricultural modernization initiatives and the infusion of Indian capital, Burma had become the rice bowl of the world by the beginning of the 20th century.

Burma was included in British India's political reforms, which gradually increased the role of elected assemblies in government. In 1937, the colony was separated from India with a fully elected assembly and significant devolution of powers to elected Burmese ministers. Burmese nationalists Ba Maw (1937–39) and U Saw (1939–42) served as prime minister. Meanwhile, the radical nationalist Aung San, frustrated in attempts to launch a revolt against British rule, fled to China in 1940. There he came into contact with Japanese agents who persuaded

him that his country's future lay in alliance with Japan. With the help of a Japanese officer, Suzuki Keiji, he assembled a group calling itself the Thirty Comrades, which formed the core of a Burma Independence Army that marched into Burma alongside Japanese forces in early 1942. Most members of this group called themselves *thakin* ('master') as a repudiation of British colonial authority. After heavy fighting, Japanese forces captured most of Burma by May 1942. The colony's European and Indian populations for the most part escaped to India. For more than two years, British and Japanese forces fought intermittently along a relatively stable front line that roughly followed the Burma–India border. Inside Burma, some resistance to the Japanese continued, mainly by ethnic and other minorities more associated with British rule, especially Muslims and Karen. Atrocities in response by Japanese troops and their Burmese allies were commonplace.

Troops from all over the British Empire served in the various war theatres. Australians played a significant role in the Pacific war while Indians bore the brunt of the fighting on the Burma front. Africans also served in Southeast Asia, including troops of 11th East African Division seen here on the road to Kalewa, Burma, in 1942.

Needing to focus on the war effort, and recognizing Burma's high level of autonomy under British rule, the Japanese military transferred most routine government tasks to an administration led by Ba Maw in August 1942. They conferred formal independence in August 1943, installing Ba Maw as Adipadi, or head of state. These measures applied mostly only to what had been Ministerial Burma. Apart from combat troops, there was little Japanese presence in the Chin and Kachin Areas, and a significant part of the Shan Area was transferred to Thailand in September 1943. Aung San was appointed head of the Burma National Army (BNA), but he became increasingly disillusioned with Japan. In late 1944, British forces launched what proved to be a decisive counter-attack on Japanese forces. In March 1945, Aung San led the BNA in a revolt against Japan and his forces joined the British in the final push against the Imperial Japanese Army. The capital, Rangoon, fell to the combined forces in May 1945, though military operations continued in the Moulmein region further east until Japan's surrender.

At the time of Japan's surrender, British plans for post-war Burma were still unformed. Some authorities envisaged several years of tutelage before independence could be granted (a conservative position taken in the White Paper on Burma issued by the Churchill government just before its electoral defeat), while others saw a swift transition to independence as

the only politically viable option. It was unclear whether the Scheduled Areas would be included. British opinion was divided, too, over whether Aung San was an acceptable partner for negotiations, given his known radical views and his recent affiliation with Japan.

Malaya

On the eve of the Second World War, British possessions in maritime Southeast Asia were a patchwork of small territories with strikingly different histories, constitutional forms, ethnic makeups and economic bases. The Straits Settlements, directly ruled by a British governor, comprised three port cities (Singapore, Malacca and Penang) on the Malacca Strait, a strategic choke point on the maritime route between India and China. All three had populations drawn from many different ethnic groups, including Chinese, Malays, Arabs, Indians and Thai. The indirectly ruled Federated Malay States (Selangor, Perak, Pahang and Negeri Sembilan, the latter a federation of six smaller states) and the somewhat less tightly controlled Unfederated Malay States (Johor, Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis) were Malay sultanates. The most prosperous states had large Chinese and Indian populations, attracted by tin mining and rubber cultivation, while others remained predominantly Malay and focussed on traditional agriculture. There were also three protectorates on the island of Borneo: Sarawak under the fabled 'white rajas' of the Brooke family, North Borneo under a British chartered company, and the sultanate of Brunei, already becoming rich from its oil wells.

Because of this diversity, there was only a weak nationalist movement in the British colonies before the outbreak of the Second World War. Some Malay nationalists looked to Japan as a developmental example, a few actively assisting the Japanese invasion in December 1941. Japan's successful conquest of Malaya, not least the fall of fortress Singapore (then renamed Syonan for the duration of the Japanese presence) left Britain's reputation in tatters.

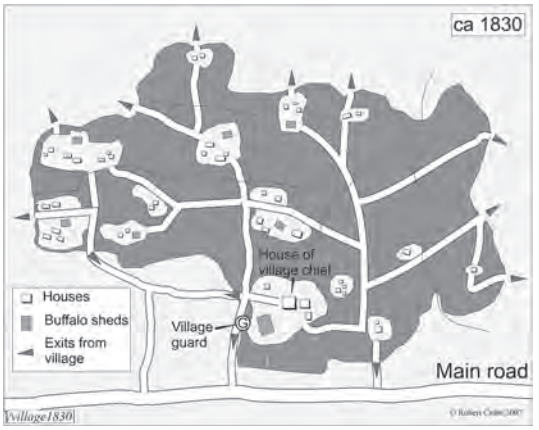
Local responses varied. Some welcomed their new colonial masters, though Malay nationalists were disappointed in October 1943 when four northern Malay states were transferred to Thailand on the grounds that they had been under Siamese suzerainty before 1909. Others, notably the Chinese immigrant community, were generally hostile. This hostility was repaid

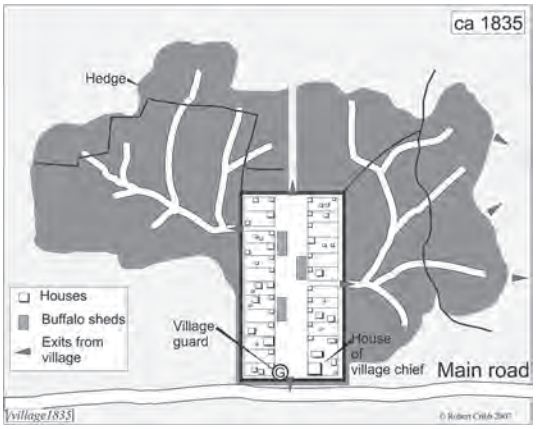
MPAJA recruitment poster, calling Malayans to 'join the guerrillas, fight the Japanese devils!'

in the form of Japanese atrocities against community members. In turn, members of a fledgling resistance movement, mainly Chinese communists actively supported by British agents, fled into the jungle. From here the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army fought the Japanese through to the war's end. The movement expected that Britain would acknowledge their efforts and sacrifices after the war by fostering the creation of a new Malayan Union, whose political system would ensure a reasonable voice for migrant communities.

At the same time, because much of the ethnic Malay population lived in territories ceded to Thailand, those Malays in what remained of Malaya felt threatened with the prospect of becoming a minority in their own country. Many Malay nationalists thus supported the idea of post-war incorporation into an independent Greater Indonesian state.

With the British reconquest of Burma largely completed in June 1945, British forces were poised to invade and reassert control over Malaya when Japan suddenly surrendered.





The Cultivation System, introduced on Java in 1830, required peasants to devote a notional fifth of their land and labour to cultivating crops designated by the colonial government as a form of land tax. The Dutch measure also had a marked effect on the organization of villages, as seen before its implementation (above) and after (below).

Both maps © Robert Cribb (online at http://www.indonesianhistory.info/pages/chapter-4.html) – see also Cribb 2010

Indonesia

Dutch influence had been present in the Indonesian archipelago since the early 17th century, when the Dutch East India Company (VOC) began to trade and to establish forts in settlements at key strategic locations. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Company's interests in the region were taken over by the Dutch state, which expanded from the VOC's core regions of Java and the Moluccas to create a colony that eventually extended from the northern tip of Sumatra to the western half of the island of New Guinea. During the 19th century, Dutch policy focussed on plantation products, using coerced labour from local people, but in the 20th century the colonial authorities embarked on a brief but remarkable programme to encourage development and welfare. The programme lost steam amidst unrealistic expectations and the strains of the Great Depression, but it contributed to

the emergence of a new elite that defined itself as Indonesian rather than as belonging primarily to one of the archipelago's many ethnic groups. Political repression, however, alongside the ethnic diversity of the colony, kept the nationalist movement relatively weak prior to the Second World War.

Japan's conquest of the Netherlands Indies in 1942 shattered Dutch colonial authority, especially because defeat was quick. Not even two weeks passed between the first Japanese landings on Java and the unconditional surrender of the Allied forces under Dutch command. Japanese forces employed the slogan, 'Asia for the Asiatics' and many nationalists hoped for immediate independence. In the event, however, the former colony was divided among two Japanese armies in the West and the Japanese Navy in the East. The pre-eminent nationalist leader, Sukarno, cooperated with the Japanese military in Java, using Japan's Pan-Asianism as a cover for promoting the idea of Indonesia, but he was partly compromised by his participation in the recruitment of *rōmusha*, labourers who were set to work on Japanese military projects, often in appalling conditions. The archipelago was also badly hit by the loss of markets for its agricultural produce and the loss of access to manufactured goods. Hundreds of thousands of Javanese died of starvation during the latter part of the occupation. Only in early 1945, with the war clearly going badly for Japan, did Japanese authorities sponsor active discussions regarding independence for the former colony via a Committee of Enquiry into Independence (BPUPK). These preparations, however, were forestalled by Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945, which imposed on Japanese occupation authorities everywhere the obligation to maintain the political status quo.

Philippines

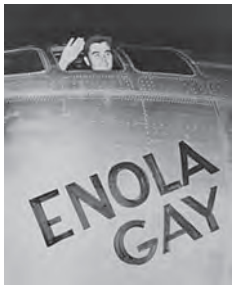
The Philippines had been a Spanish colony from the 16th century until 1898, when the archipelago was seized by the United States following the Spanish–American War. In taking control of the former colony, the U.S. also had to fight Filipino nationalists who were fighting their own revolution against Spain and might well have secured independence but for the American intervention. The U.S. quickly decided that the Philippines would not be incorporated into the American polity. Instead, they promised independence and soon began to devolve power to local elites. In 1935, the Philippines became a commonwealth with its own President, Manuel L. Quezon, and a high degree of internal self-government. Full independence was scheduled for 4 July 1944, albeit with the expectation that close economic ties with the U.S. would remain.

With independence in prospect, Filipino elites had relatively little reason to welcome the Japanese occupation, especially as economic conditions grew more difficult. Quezon fled and established a government-in-exile, but many other members of the elite treated the occupation as simply a change of overlord and worked with the Japanese authorities. In October 1943, Japan formally granted independence to a Philippine Republic headed by

Photo: Gaetano Faillace, courtesy of the U.S. National Archives

'I have returned' — another iconic image from World War II: General MacArthur wading ashore to Leyte island in the Philippines on 20 October 1944. To his right is Philippine President Sergio Osmeña. After fleeing the island fortress of Corregidor in Manila Bay in February 1942, several weeks before it fell to the invading Japanese, MacArthur had vowed to the Philippine people that he would return.

a prominent pre-war nationalist, José P. Laurel. The commander of U.S. and Philippine forces at the time of the Japanese invasion, General Douglas MacArthur, made his reputation in a defence of the territory that lasted until May 1942, long after neighbouring French, British and Dutch defences had crumbled. As Supreme Commander of the South West Pacific Area, he oversaw the reconquest of the Philippines in 1944–45, a struggle that was bitterly fought and saw the destruction of most of Manila during heavy fighting to capture the city in February–March 1945. In February 1945, MacArthur formally restored the Philippine Commonwealth with Sergio Osmeña as President, President Quezon having died in exile. By August, U.S. and Philippine forces were training together in preparation for a planned land invasion of Japan.



5 August

***Enola Gay* readied for Hiroshima mission.** With final preparations underway for the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the force commander who will pilot the flight instructs that his mother's name, Enola Gay, be painted on the B-29's nose. The bomber's regular pilot (who will co-pilot this mission) is outraged.

'Little Boy' is loaded onto the B-29 bomber *Enola Gay*

Cabinet crisis in Vietnam. Premier Tran Trong Kim returns from Hanoi after negotiating with the Japanese Governor-General for reversion of Cochinchina to Vietnamese imperial rule. In Hue, however, he faces a cabinet revolt over his handling of the matter and concerns that the country faces more pressing issues, like popular unrest and the threat of resumed famine. Within two days, all ministers have resigned. When Premier Kim proves unable to form a new cabinet, this technically leaves the old one in caretaker mode. Although the machinery of government continues to function, imperial leadership is disrupted at a critical moment.

Justifying the Bomb

The American cultural and literary historian, Paul Fussell, was unapologetic in his support for the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A World War II veteran who served and was wounded in France, Fussell regretted the bomb was not ready in time to end the German war and thus save the lives of millions of Jews as well as Allied and German soldiers. As for Japan, there is no question in his mind that the bomb was necessary, a case he lays out in his famous essay from 1981, 'Thank God for the Atomic Bomb'.

In this essay, Fussell describes plans for the invasion of the Japanese home islands. They 'assumed that it would require a full year, to November 1946, for the Japanese to be sufficiently worn down by land-combat attrition to surrender. By that time, one million American casualties was the expected price.' He also quotes at length the

The battle for Iwo Jima lasted more than five bloody weeks. In addition to the appalling human cost, the destruction to the island's environment was immense.

author and veteran, E.B. Sledge, who reported that the fighting grew 'more vicious the closer we got to Japan', the carnage of Iwo Jima and Okinawa were far worse than what had come before. Sledge recalls:

> what we had experienced in fighting the Japs (pardon the expression) on Peleliu and Okinawa caused us to formulate some very definite opinions that the invasion … would be a ghastly bloodletting. It would shock the American public and the world. [Every Japanese] soldier, civilian, woman, and child would fight to the death with whatever weapons they had, rifle, grenade, or bamboo spear.

Nor were there only American lives at risk, Fussell points out. The invasion of Malaya scheduled for 9 September would pit almost 200,000 British-led troops (the same number as used to invade Normandy) against well-defended Japanese positions. 'But for the atomic bombs', a British observer intimate with the Japanese defences noted, 'I don't think we would have stood a cat in hell's chance. We would have been murdered in the biggest massacre of the war. They would have annihilated the lot of us.'

While not denying that the atomic bombing of Japan was a vast historical tragedy, Fussell asserts that the international mismanagement of the whole nuclear challenge (not least the capture of the nuclear-power industry by 'the inept and the mendacious') should not tempt us 'to misimagine the circumstances of the bomb's first "use."' President Truman, he argues, 'knew war, and he knew better than some of his critics then and now what he was doing and why he was doing it. "Having found the bomb," he said, "we have used it. … We have used it to shorten the agony of young Americans."'

Incorporating material from:

Paul Fussell, 'Thank God for the Atom Bomb', *The New Republic*, August 1981.

E.B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*. New York: Presidio Press, 1981.

6 August

Hiroshima destroyed by U.S. atomic bomb. In a blast equal to 12–15,000 tons of TNT, 'Little Boy' destroys 12 square kilometres of the city. About 75,000 Hiroshima residents are killed and 100,000 or more will succumb to effects of the bomb within four months. Military members of the Japanese government dismiss the idea that this is a nuclear attack or that it could be repeated.

Truman threatens Japan. A White House statement announces the bombing of Hiroshima and quotes the response of President Truman, who is travelling back from the Potsdam Conference. The president warns Japan's apparently intransigent leaders: 'If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.'

Always controversial

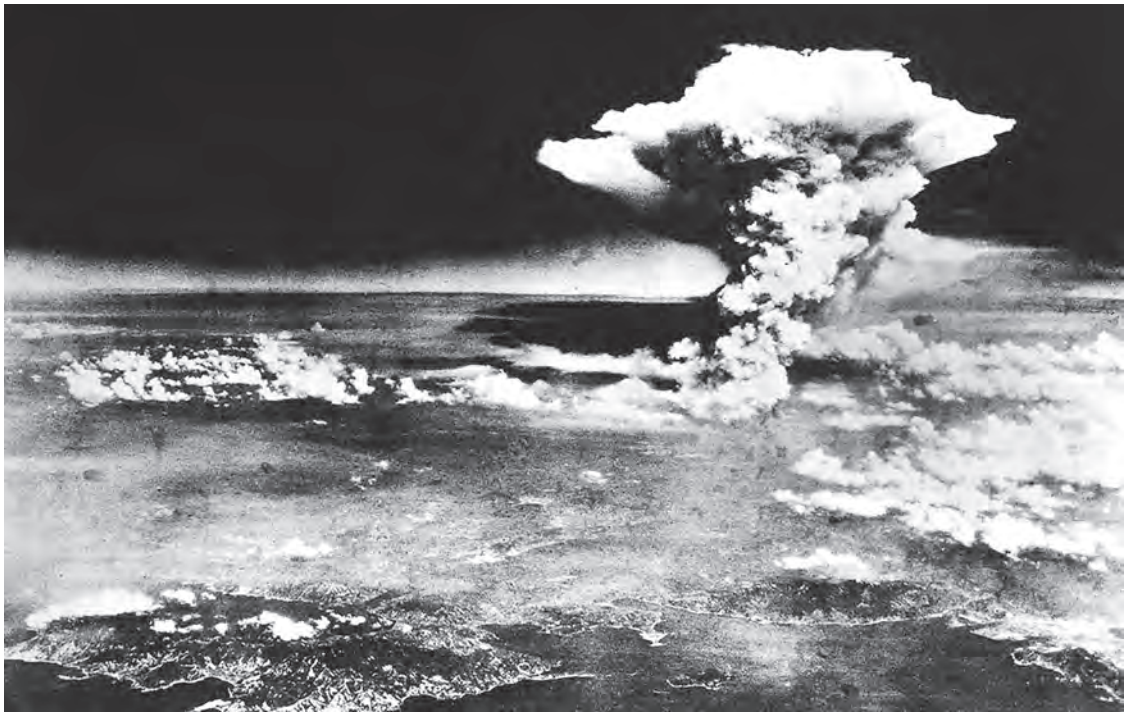
The American decision to deploy the new technology of nuclear destruction against densely populated cities will always remain controversial. Supporters of this decision – and, to the present day, this includes the great majority of Americans – argue that the bombs were necessary to end the war against a fanatical enemy quickly and save untold numbers of American lives. A well-known essay by the distinguished historian Paul Fussell succinctly captures this position in its title: 'Thank God for the Atomic Bomb' (see opposite).

Critics of the decision to use the bombs argue that the Japanese government could have been persuaded to surrender by other policies – most notably, by (1) clarifying the U.S. terms of surrender (to make clear that Japan's imperial dynasty would be maintained), and (2) waiting for the imminent declaration of war against Japan by the Soviet Union (which the Japanese were known to be desperately trying to prevent).

This controversy will never be resolved but should never be ignored, for it raises practical and moral issues of the highest order. The debate over the use of the bombs in 1945 is inseparable from present-day controversies concerning just and unjust war. It involves an issue that has been with us since World War II and was abruptly thrown to the forefront of popular consciousness by 9–11: when, if ever, is it appropriate to identify civilians as a legitimate target of war?

John W. Dower

Extracted from 'Ground Zero 1945', in *MIT Visualizing Cultures*, http://ocw.mit.edu/.



Above: An atomic cloud mushrooms over Hiroshima, taken from the *Enola Gay*, 6 August 1945. Below: The atomic cloud over Hiroshima, taken by Yamada Seiso from Mikumari Gorge (left) and by Oki Masami from Kure Naval Arsenal (right).

Images of Hiroshima

The photograph taken from the windows of *Enola Gay*, the B-29 U.S. aircraft flying away from Hiroshima after dropping 'Little Boy' – the first atomic bomb to be used against a populated city – is a well-known, haunting and lasting image of the devastation developing just under it (upper). The cloud rises over the city after the atomic bomb detonated only few moments before, at roughly 180 meters (590 feet) directly above a side street of modern day Hiroshima.

Less known are the images of the atomic mushroom as these were experienced from below, by the citizens of Hiroshima. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum preserves several such images.

Yamada Seiso took the lower-left photo from his home near Mikumari Gorge only two minutes after the explosion, making it the earliest image of the atomic bomb. According to records held by the U.S. military, the cloud billowed to 9,000 meters in the sky within three minutes of the blast. Apart from Yamada's image, which clearly presents the mushroom shape, images taken from positions much closer to the hypocentre reveal the blast as a huge smoke cloud, blocking the sight, flattening the space and any objects within it, creating a sense of opacity and disappearance into invisibility, holding fear and awe in the presence of the incredible sound and flash of the bomb. In Japanese this has become to be known as the *Pika* (flash of brightness), *Don* (sound of the detonating bomb).

Another point of view (lower right) comes from Kure Naval Arsenal, now the Japan Coast Guard Academy, just outside the city, where Oki Masami took this photo. Records made by the Japanese military indicate that it looked as if something was burning within the atomic cloud, with strong sparks and flashes that gave a view of a grand fire within the smoke cloud.

Ayelet Zohar

We walked heading toward my home … When we were resting because we were so exhausted, I found my … great uncle and great aunt coming toward us. That was quite a coincidence. As you know, we have a proverb about meeting Buddha in Hell. My encounter with my relatives at that time was just like that. They seem to be the Buddha to me wandering in the living hell.

~ Takahashi Akihiro, aged 14 at the time

In the photographer's own words

I had finished breakfast and was getting ready to go to the newspaper when it happened. There was a flash from the indoor wires as if lightening had struck. I didn't hear any sound, how shall I say, the world around me turned bright white. And I was momentarily blinded as if a magnesium light had lit up in front of my eyes. Immediately after that, the blast came. I was bare from the waist up, and the blast was so intense, it felt like hundreds of needles were stabbing me all at once. The blast grew large holes in the walls of the first and second floor. I could barely see the room because of all the dirt. I pulled my camera and the clothes issued by the military headquarters out from under the mound of the debris, and I got dressed. I thought I would go either to the newspaper or to the headquarters.

Photo and caption by Matsushige Yoshito

Police pour cooking oil over junior high school children to soothe their burns. Photo taken on Hiroshima's Miyuki Bridge between 11:00 and 11:30 a.m., 2.3 kilometres from the hypocenter of the blast.

That was about 40 minutes after the blast. Near the Miyuki Bridge, there was a police box. Most of the victims who had gathered there were junior high school girls from the Hiroshima Girls Business School and the Hiroshima Junior High School No.1. They had been mobilized to evacuate buildings and were outside when the bomb fell. Having been directly exposed to the heat rays, they were covered with blisters the size of balls, on their backs, their faces, their shoulders and their arms. The blisters were starting to

burst open and their skin hung down like rags. Some of the children even had burns on the soles of their feet. They'd lost their shoes and run barefoot through the burning fire. When I saw this, I thought I would take a picture and I picked up my camera. But I couldn't push the shutter because the sight was so pathetic. Even though I too was a victim of the same bomb, I only had minor injuries from glass fragments, whereas these people were dying. It was such a cruel sight that I couldn't bring myself to press the shutter.

Perhaps I hesitated there for about 20 minutes, but I finally summoned up the courage to take one picture. Then, I moved 4 or 5 meters forward to take the second picture. Even today, I clearly remember how the view finder was clouded over with my tears. I felt that everyone was looking at me and thinking angrily, 'He's taking our picture and will bring us no help at all.' Still, I had to press the shutter, so I hardened my heart and finally I took the second shot. Those people must have thought me duly cold-hearted. Then, I saw a burnt streetcar which had just turned the corner at Kamiya-cho. There were passengers still in the car. I put my foot onto the steps of

Photo and caption by Matsushige Yoshito

Same view as in the first photo but from a closer perspective.

Photo and caption by Matsushige Yoshito

Photo and caption by Matsushige Yoshito

Above: An injured policeman writes relief certificates for rice rations to A-bomb survivors. Taken at a tram stop near the Miyuki Bridge about 5 p.m. Right: Nuclear shadow.

the car and I looked inside. There were perhaps 15 or 16 people in front of the car. They laid dead one on top of another. Kamiya-cho was very close to the hypocenter, about 200 meters away. The passengers had stripped them of all their clothes. They say that when you are terrified, you tremble and your hair stands on end. And I felt just this tremble when I saw this scene. I stepped down to take a picture and I put my hand on my camera. But I felt so sorry for these dead and naked people whose photo would be left to posterity that I couldn't take the shot. Also, in those days we weren't allowed to publish the photographs of corpses in the newspapers.

After that, I walked around. I walked through the section of town which had been hit hardest. I walked for close to three hours. But I couldn't take even one picture of that central area. There were other cameramen in the army shipping group and also at the newspaper as well. But the fact that not a single one of them was able to take pictures seems to indicate just how brutal the bombing actually was. I don't pride myself on it, but it's a small consolation that I was able to take at least five pictures.

I walked for close to three hours. But I couldn't take even one picture of that central area.
~ Matsushige Yoshito

Photo and caption by Matsushige Yoshito

Matsushige's wife, wearing an air raid helmet, attempts to clear rubble from their barber shop home. About 2 p.m., 2.7 kilometers from the blast hypocentre.

During the war, air-raids took place practically every night. And after the war began, there were many food shortages. Those of us who experienced all these hardships, we hope that such suffering will never be experienced again by our children and our grandchildren. Not only our children and grandchildren, but all future generations should not have to go through this tragedy. That is why I want young people to listen to our testimonies and to choose the right path, the path which leads to peace.

Photographs and vignette by Matsushige Yoshito
Generously shared by Ayelet Zohar

Despite the scale of these casualties, the visual record of them is comparatively sparse. Censorship by U.S. occupation authorities, who exercised control over defeated Japan from August 1945 to April 1952, resulted in a remarkable occurrence: the public had virtually no access to graphic images of Hiroshima and Nagasaki until seven years after the bombs were dropped.

~ John Dower

7 August

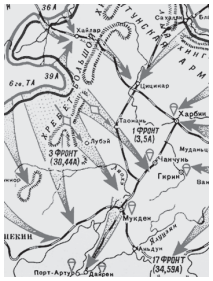
Japan accelerates plans for Indonesian independence. After months of work by an investigatory body planning for Indonesian independence, the Japanese announce a new preparatory committee (PPKI) to implement the transition. This committee includes representatives from the outer islands as well as Java.

Indonesian nationalist leaders Sukarno and Muhammad Hatta (centre and right) worked closely with the Japanese to achieve Indonesian independence. However, with their knowledge, Sutan Sjahrir (left) went underground to oppose the Japanese and thus make future relations with the Allies less problematic.

8 August

Soviets declare war on Japan. Ending months of Japanese attempts to save the Soviet–Japanese Neutrality Pact and have the Soviets broker a peace deal with the Allies, Soviet foreign minister Molotov informs Japanese ambassador Satō Naotake that the Soviet Union will be at war with Japan from 9 August. It is early evening in Moscow when Satō is told but just before midnight on the border with Manchuria.

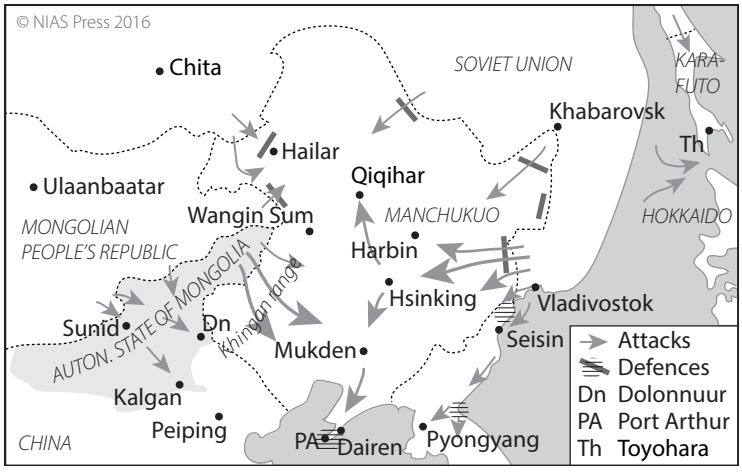
Soviet soldiers cross a bridge in Manchuria



9 August

Massive attack catches Japanese unprepared in Manchuria. One minute after midnight, about 1.5 million Soviet troops launch operation August Storm, a giant pincer attack from Mongolia and eastern Siberia on Japan's badly under-strength Kwantung Army, which is in the middle of a redeployment. The western prong includes Mongolian units even though the Mongolian People's Republic has not declared war. Its attack out of the Gobi desert into Inner Mongolia and across the supposedly impassable Khingan range into central Manchuria is completely unexpected.

Above: The 39th Army of the Soviet Union marching in the Manchurian steppes.



Right: The Soviet–Mongolian invasion of Manchuria and associated attacks on Korea and Karafuto (southern Sakhalin). The subsequent capture of the Kurile Islands is off map.

Based on Li-Cribb 2014, p. 187 and public domain Russian map (http://rkka.ru/maps/tv25.gif

Nagasaki devastated by atomic bomb. Aiming to convince the Japanese leadership that the bombing of Hiroshima was not a once-only event, the Americans drop a second atomic bomb on a Japanese city. With poor visibility preventing the bombing of Kokura, the mission is diverted to Nagasaki where at least 20,000 people (and maybe triple that number) are killed that day.

Suzuki Kantarō

Japanese leadership divided over surrender. The double shock of the Soviet invasion and bombing of Nagasaki causes Prime Minister Suzuki Kantarō and some ministers to urge an immediate end to the war; others remain steadfast. At this stage none will openly suggest accepting the unconditional surrender demanded by the Allies. As meetings continue into the night, the Emperor is asked to decide on surrender or continued resistance. Reluctantly, he chooses surrender.

The day after

Yamahata Yosuke was 22 years old when he started working as a military photographer, documenting the Japanese army progression in Asia, but he returned to Japan in 1942. On 9 August, immediately after the detonation of the plutonium bomb over Nagasaki, Yamahata (still on military duty, working for the Japanese News and Information Bureau's Western Army Corps in Hakata, Fukuoka prefecture, 160 kilometers north of Nagasaki) was rushed to Nagasaki by train. Along with Eiji Yamada, a painter, and correspondent Jun Higashi, Yahamata arrived 12 hours later. The trio was assigned to record the destruction for military propaganda purposes. Yamahata began photographing early in the morning of 10 August, working for nearly eight hours with two cameras and taking 121 pictures altogether. However, as a result of problems during the development process, some of the images are blurry or dotted with black spots. The photographs appeared in public for the first time in the *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper on 21 August.

After the Allied Forces imposed strict restrictions on any form of report or coverage related to the atomic bombs, the pictures were not allowed to be published or circulated until the U.S. occupation ended in 1952. The pictures quickly appeared in *Life* magazine (9 Sep 1952) and were simultaneously published in Japan in book form. Edward Steichen then included several images in his legendary exhibition *The Family of Man* in 1955. In 1965, at the

Photo Yamahata Yosuke, © Yamahata Shogo

Nagasaki, in the morning of 10 August 1945 – at Ibinokuchi-machi (Takara-machi), 1.6 km south of the blast hypocentre.

age of 48, Yamahata was diagnosed with cancer and died several months later.

The images selected here offer two different perspectives of the scene of destruction. The first one, taken from above, barely exposes the details of the devastation, but it gives a good vantage point on the unfolding event: framed and overshadowed by the remnant branches and leaves of a willow tree that survived the horrific blast, which continues to smoulder. Onlookers are facing away from the camera/viewer, leaning over a banister and looking into the landscape of rubble, dust, smoke, broken and twisted wires and pipes, spraying water from a burst water main, looking into emptiness and nothingness and offering the viewer an introduction to the details of the obliteration revealed on the second image.

The second image (overleaf) is much more informative than the first one, exposing some graphic, tangible details lying behind the opaque screen of light, smoke and dust of the first one. An examination of the details reveals the presence of charred bodies lying in the close foreground and stretching away towards the vanishing point of the picture, as if never ending. The train's electric line forms a series of erected empty gates. Someone in the background is walking and watching with a white bandage around his arm. In the far distance, at the foot of the mountain, one can identify the remains of a modern building and the chimneys of an industrial complex close to the convergence area, blurred and distorted by the rising smoke. Only at the closer plane, standing on the left edge of the photograph, is someone attempting to register, to put order and logic, to categorize and give shape to the devastation-behind-words or imagination in front of us.

Ayelet Zohar

Photo Yamahata Yosuke, © Yamahata Shogo

Devastated Nagasaki near Matsuyama-machi (about 50–100 meters west of the blast epicentre), early afternoon on 10 August 1945. On the left, painter Yamada Eiji sketches the disaster.

Deciding the boundaries of independent Indonesia

The Japanese military in Indonesia moved quickly after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima; it was obvious that, with Soviet entry into the war imminent, Indonesian support would be their main asset in a near-hopeless struggle. On 9 August a Japanese military aircraft flew Sukarno, Hatta and Dr Radjiman Wediodiningrat (the doctor/aristocrat who had chaired the Committee of Enquiry into Independence, BPUPK) to Saigon, where the headquarters of the whole Southern Regions Army had been moved to months before. They could no longer fly safely to Tokyo. Unaware of the Soviet invasion of Manchuria and atomic bombing of Nagasaki just hours before, the three men were taken to the hill station of Dalat to meet the Commander, Field Marshal Terauchi Hisaichi, who told them that Japan would recognize Indonesian independence. Sukarno and Hatta would be chair and deputy of a new 21-member Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence (PPKI), with representatives from more than just Java, to which previous steps towards independence had been limited.

Count Terauchi Hisaichi, *Gensui* (or Marshal) in the Imperial Japanese Army and Commander of the Southern Expeditionary Army Group.

Nationalist coup attempt in Cambodia. A seven-man group tries to seize power in Phnom Penh. Its members are young nationalists with Japanese links but no clear guidance from anywhere. By next day, the coup has failed without any bloodshed and its participants are soon arrested (and released shortly afterwards). Although probably not the instigator, the nationalist, pro-Japanese foreign minister, Son Ngoc Thanh, emerges as a beneficiary, his power enhanced. Probably at about this time, King Sihanouk turns against him.

Indonesian nationalist leaders fly to Vietnam. As rumours mount of a Japanese surrender, Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta and Dr Radjiman Wediodiningrat fly to Saigon and on to Dalat in the Vietnamese highlands. Here, Field Marshal Terauchi Hisaichi, commander of Japanese forces in Southeast Asia, personally assures them that independence will be granted on 24 August. Sukarno is appointed chairman of the PPKI, whose first meeting is planned for the 18th.

What would be the boundaries of such an Indonesia? The Netherlands Indies had been divided between three Japanese authorities, Sumatra being joined with Malaya for a period (1942–43), and parts of the East were now occupied by the Allies. The boundaries had been discussed in the BPUPK in July, where pragmatic Hatta had favoured the Netherlands Indies without New Guinea as more cohesive and achievable. However, a large majority, 45 to 19, had supported Sukarno and Muhammad Yamin in opting for a 'Greater Indonesia' embracing the Netherlands Indies, British Malaya and Borneo, and Portuguese Timor. Sukarno was able to report the enthusiasm of the Malay nationalist movement led by Ibrahim Yaacob to join Indonesia. The fact that Malays were outnumbered by Chinese in what was left of Malaya after the northern states had been transferred to Thailand made a separate Malayan independence neither attractive nor viable to these men. The plane carrying the three Indonesians to Saigon stopped long enough in Singapore for Sukarno and Hatta to meet some of the pro-Indonesian Malay nationalists, who had defiantly raised the Indonesian flag on Singapore's tallest building in honour of the visit. No doubt this issue was discussed with Terauchi and others in Dalat, since he had authority either to include or exclude Malaya from the preparatory committee, PPKI.

He chose the latter. The plane carrying the three leaders back to Jakarta stopped at Taiping, the Japanese military headquarters in

[Indonesia's] pre-eminent national figure, Sukarno, was in a sense everything Ibrahim in Malaya aspired to be … [and he] hoped to gain freedom for Malaya in the slipstream of the advance for Indonesia.

~ from Christopher Bayly and Timothy Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941–1945*

10 August

Japan signals willingness to a conditional surrender. In accordance with the Emperor's decision, Japan's Foreign Ministry sends telegrams to the Allies agreeing to a surrender provided the position of the Emperor is not prejudiced. The Allies reject this proposal two days later.

Chinese communists signal their post-war ambitions. Chu Teh, CCP commander in the north, announces that Japanese soldiers may surrender to any anti-Japanese armed forces (including the CCP). Next day, CCP leader Lin Piao begins force-marching a large army along the Peiping–Mukden Railway into Manchuria ahead of Chinese government forces.

Soviets pressure China to sign friendship treaty. With Japanese forces in Manchuria reeling before the Soviet onslaught and MPR troops advancing in Inner Mongolia, Stalin personally warns the Chinese government to sign a friendship treaty before it is too late. Negotiations have been stalled for months, with China resisting Soviet demands for extensive concessions in Manchuria and recognition of Outer Mongolian independence.

Chu Teh

9 August: Deciding the boundaries of independent Indonesia (cont'd)

Malaya, where they met Ibrahim Yaacob and heard his passionate desire to lead his country to independence as part of Indonesia. Sukarno was reportedly impressed, Hatta much less so. Ibrahim wanted to come to Jakarta for the independence preparations, but the plane flew on without him. Instead it stopped in Medan to pick up three representatives from Sumatra for the PPKI meeting, selected without reference to the Japanese 25th Army in Sumatra and its preferred popular leaders. Another Japanese military plane flew two PPKI delegates to Batavia from Makassar.

Once the Japanese surrender was known, all thought of redrawing boundaries was forgotten. The number of enemies had to be minimized by declaring only former Netherlands territories to be the target of the independence movement.

Anthony Reid

See also 'The place of Malays in a new world order' (p. 257)

The role of the emperor in Japan

The importance and power of the emperor (or empress) in Japan has waxed and waned throughout Japanese history, but by the late nineteenth century the emperor had come to be seen as a descendent of an unbroken line of sovereigns stretching all the way back to the fifth century B.C.E. Ultimately, national mythology held, the imperial line was descended from the Shintō deities, and thus divine. This rhetoric became deep-seated in the Meiji Period, when the emperor was revered as both a spiritual and political leader who brought Japan into the modern age. That reverence carried over into the Shōwa Period; Japanese military expansion was done in the Emperor's name, and the Japanese people saw their country's conquests as furthering the glory of the imperial family and, by extension, the country. Indeed, the emperor was seen as a manifestation of the national polity.

Thus, when Japan was faced with the Potsdam Declaration, which demanded in part the elimination 'for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest', there was grave concern that the Emperor would be included in such a group. Indeed, attempts by the Japanese leadership to safeguard the supreme, constitutional position of the emperor were a major factor in delaying the Japanese surrender. Had Japan accepted the Potsdam ultimatum immediately, hundreds of thousands of lives may not have been lost and the world geopolitical situation would have been quite different without the Soviet invasion and advent of nuclear warfare.

After the war the emperor was not put on trial as a war criminal. The decision not to prosecute him was MacArthur's, and remained controversial both in and outside of Japan for decades to come. The other controversial decision by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers was the demand that the Emperor renounce his divine status, which he did in January 1946, saying in part that 'the ties between Us and Our people have always stood upon mutual trust and affection. They do not depend upon mere legends and myths. They are not predicated on the false conception that the Emperor is divine, and that the Japanese people are superior to other races and fated to rule the world.'

Susanna Fessler

The Japanese Government are ready to accept the terms enumerated in the joint declaration which was issued at Potsdam on July 26th, 1945, by the heads of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, and China, and later subscribed to by the Soviet Government, with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler.

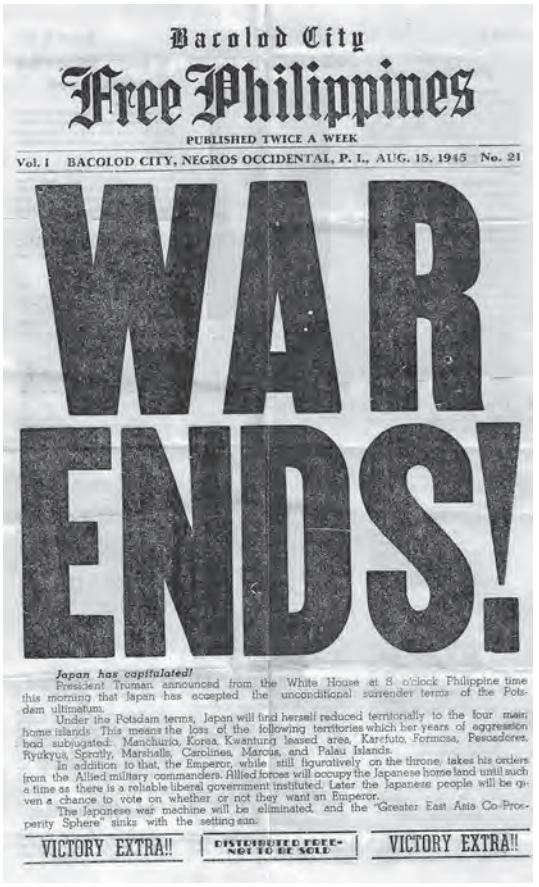
~ conditional surrender offer by Japan, August 10th

Mongolia proclaims war of unification. A day after its forces joined the Soviet attack on Manchuria, the Mongolian People's Republic formally declares war on Japan and receives the first of many unification calls from Inner Mongolian leaders. Next day, the official organ *Unen Sonin*, which only a month earlier had switched to Cyrillic, reverts to traditional Mongolian script to reach a wider audience. It reports that the war aims to unify all Mongols on the Mongolian plateau.

The front page of *Unen Sonin* on 11 August 1945. Page 2 is still in Cyrillic script.

British move to retake Hong Kong. Looking to thwart Chinese aims to occupy the Crown Colony and return it to Chinese rule, the British cabinet agrees to send a British fleet to Hong Kong. Pro-British (Chinese-Macanese) agents also send an order to Franklin Gimson, the Colonial Secretary for Hong Kong, to formally re-establish British colonial rule. Gimson is still being interned by the Japanese in Hong Kong.

Premature peace celebrations in Manila. While the Philippines is beginning to rebuild after years of war and Japanese occupation, the country seethes with preparations for the invasion of Japan. U.S. military supplies pour in. Hospitals and other facilities are established in anticipation of the invasion efforts. Elements of the Philippine Army are also involved. Early but unconfirmed news of Japan's surrender on the 10th results in premature celebrations in Manila, including the firing of weapons. Similar early celebrations erupt four days later when the U.S. Office of War Information newspaper *Free Philippines* prematurely announces the end of the war.



Bacolod City

Free Philippines

PUBLISHED TWICE A WEEK

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WAR ENDS!

Japan has capitulated!

President Truman announced from the White House at 8 o'clock Philippine time this morning that Japan has accepted the unconditional surrender terms of the Potsdam ultimatum.

Under the Potsdam terms, Japan will find herself reduced territorially to the four main home islands. This means the loss of the following territories which her years of aggression had subjugated: Manchuria, Korea, Kwantung leased area, Karafuto, Formosa, Pescadores, Ryukyus, Spratly, Marshalls, Carolines, Marcus, and Palau Islands.

In addition to that, the Emperor, while still figuratively on the throne, takes his orders from the Allied military commanders. Allied forces will occupy the Japanese home land until such a time as there is a reliable liberal government instituted. Later the Japanese people will be given a chance to vote on whether or not they want an Emperor.

The Japanese war machine will be eliminated, and the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" sinks with the setting sun.

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Courtesy of Herbert Friedman

Ulaanbaatar mural commemorating World War II

Mongolian participation in the war against Japan

The Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) declared 'Holy War against Japan' in the night of 9–10 August 1945 'to liberate and unite all Mongol tribes under one family-state.' In his radio address to people in both the MPR and Inner Mongolia, premier Khorloogiin Choibalsan underlined two objectives for Mongolian participation in the war: first, to liberate Barga and Inner Mongolia from imperialism and to develop a unified Mongolian national culture, language, tradition and religion; and second, to assist the Soviets in the war against Japan according to the Mutual Assistance Pact of 1936 signed between the MPR and Soviet Union.

The MPR and Soviet Union had already set up a joint headquarters on 16 July 1945. Marshal Choibalsan was appointed as Commander in Chief, assisted by cavalry expert Soviet colonel-general I.A. Pliyev. On 9 August 1945, a Soviet–Mongolian cavalry-mechanized army of 42,000 men under the command of Pliyev and his Mongolian deputy general, Lhagvasuren, started its two-pronged offensive: one route from Baishint in Sukhbaatar province passing the Hingan range toward Dolonnuur and the other from Zamiin Ud across Chahar toward Kalgan (Mong.: Chuulalt Halgan, Ch.: Zhangjiakou). Their key operational task was to secure the western flank of the main Soviet tank army, which aimed at Manchuria from eastern Mongolia.

The Mongolian–Soviet army encoun-

tered very little Japanese army resistance along the way, except some divisions of De Wang's cavalry, which were easily disarmed; in fact, many of them voluntarily joined the MPR army. Between 19–21 August, one Mongolian and one Soviet brigade faced fierce resistance as they sought to seize the Kalgan passage. As many as 80 Mongolians and 201 Soviets were killed or wounded. Two days later, the joint army disarmed a Japanese division of the Mongolia Garrison Army in Jehe. The Mongolian Army wanted to continue south to Kalgan, seat of Prince De's puppet Mongolian government. However, the Soviet commander was bound not only by the recently completed (Nationalist) Sino–Soviet Friendship Treaty (see p. 55) but also by a secret political and military agreement between the Soviets and Chinese communists, specifically the 8th Army of the CCP, that Mongolian–Soviet forces would not move beyond the Great Wall. Having marched 1,000 km in 16 days, the 20,000-strong Mongolian army, of four cavalry divisions reinforced by a mechanical brigade, a tank regiment, and an aviation division, would march no farther.

Mongolian soldiers marched with great enthusiasm to liberate their blood brothers and sisters in Inner Mongolia, as they had in 1913. Many Inner Mongolian banners welcomed them and were ready to join the MPR. High-ranking Mongolian government officials visited Shilingol and Hulunbuir to coordinate a unification process and the government sent four fact-finding missions to Hulunbuir and Chahar. De Wang's family was captured but taken to Ulaanbaatar and treated with high respect. Throughout August 1945, Mongolian newspapers highlighted the unification of Outer and Inner Mongolians but this was not to be. For Stalin, Mongolian participation in the war was a good bargaining chip with the Chinese Nationalist Government to secure the MPR's independence and his influence on it. After six weeks of negotiations, the Soviets and the Chinese, with support of the U.S., agreed that Outer Mongolia should be recognized as a national state within its existing boundaries, Inner Mongolia would remain part of China. Ten days later, on 24 August, the Mongolian army was marching through Inner Mongolia when Chiang Kai-shek announced his decision to recognize MPR's independence.

The great powers' agreement dramatically changed the character of the Mongolian army campaign. The original purpose, a war of liberation, lost its meaning and found himself in the uncomfortable position of abandoning his personal dream as well as the hopes of the Inner Mongolian people. Choibalsan had no choice but to accept the offer of the MPR's independence. As a sign of good faith, Choibalsan visited Chahar to honour the Provisional Government of the People's Republic of South Mongolia in September 1945. With disappointment, the Mongolian army withdrew from Inner Mongolia later that month and the Provisional Government was dissolved two months later as Inner Mongolia was absorbed into China.

Ravdan Bold

11 August

Soviets launch attack on Japan's home islands. In line with the Yalta Agreement but also as part of Soviet plans to invade Hokkaido, Soviet forces attack the Japanese colony of Karafuto (southern Sakhalin). Although outnumbered three to one, Japanese troops resist fiercely, disrupting Moscow's overall strategy. The Soviet conquest of Karafuto is finally completed on the 25th.

Soviet forces enter Korea. An amphibious force of naval infantry storms ashore at Yuki (Korean: Unggi) near the Soviet–Korean border. The port falls on the next day after Soviet land forces arrive. Two days later, an amphibious assault on the major port of Seisin (Chŏngjin) meets fierce Japanese resistance. The eventual fall of Seisin on the 16th totally disrupts Japanese sea and ground communications with the Kwantung army in Manchuria.

White flags of surrender hanging from the central post office in Toyohara, capital of Karafuto prefecture, on 25 August.

Prince De at bay. Soviet–MPR forces take Sunid and the palace of Prince Demchugdongrob (De Wang), ruler of the Japanese-supported 'Mongolian Autonomous State'. At the time, Prince De is in his capital, Kalgan, but his family are captured and taken to Ulaanbaatar, where they are housed in comfortable quarters.

Manchukuo Mongol officers rebel. Cadets of the Hsingan Military Academy, an officer's school in Wangin Sum (Wangyemiao) training Mongols in Manchukuo, are ordered to retreat to Baicheng to the south to prepare to fight against the Soviet–Mongolian Army. En route, they rebel and kill their Japanese instructors, reversing direction and joining the Soviet–Mongolian forces advancing from the north.

Growing political turmoil in Vietnam. The transfer of local government to Vietnamese imperial control in many cities in Tonkin and Annam, celebrated earlier in August with destruction of French colonial statues and renaming of streets, fails to quieten the growing unrest. Despite stern Japanese warnings against illegal political activities the previous day, fears of the imminent return of French colonial rule bring Dai Viet nationalists out onto the streets of Hanoi to oppose 'imperialist invasion plots'. That evening, hearing news of a possible Japanese surrender and looking to pre-empt a Viet Minh takeover, their leaders hold an emergency meeting to discuss the seizure of power from imperial authorities in Hanoi with tacit Japanese support. Opinions are sharply divided; some want to take action immediately, others fear being seen by the Allies as Japanese collaborators. No decision is reached at the meeting.

The Amur Flotilla is welcomed by residents in Manchuria, Soviet naval forces also taking a leading role in the invasion of Korea.

Courtesy of Dutch National Archives

12 August

38th Parallel to divide Korea. While drafting General Order No. 1 (see p. 97), U.S. officials propose the 38th Parallel as the line to divide future U.S. and Soviet occupation zones in Korea. The Soviets agree. Their attempt to obtain a corresponding northern occupation zone for Japan on the island of Hokkaido is rejected by Washington.

Still no agreement on friendship treaty. Hard bargaining continues between Chinese and Soviet negotiators in Moscow; U.S. ambassador Averell Harriman asserts that any treaties to be signed between China and the Soviets must be consistent with the Yalta Agreement.

Mongolian independence and the United States

An important aspect of the negotiations leading to the Sino–Soviet Friendship Treaty, signed on 14 August (see p. 68), was Mongolian independence. Officially the negotiations and the agreement were bilateral in nature, but the U.S. was very much a backstage presence that muted the effects of Soviet attempts to blackmail China.

During Sino–Soviet negotiations that began in early July and ended with the 14 August treaty signing, Nationalist China involved the United States to maximize their gains in the negotiations; the U.S. was keen to prevent the expansion of Soviet influence into China. Soong Tse-ven (Song Ziwen), China's Foreign Minister, worked closely with the American Ambassador in Moscow. Soong tried hard to avoid giving full independence to Mongolia within existing borders and even as late as early August he was still trying to persuade Stalin to reassess the border after the war. After meeting with Soong on 8 August, W. Averell Harriman, American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, reported to President Truman that Stalin insisted on the recognition of Outer Mongolia within its existing boundary. Further, Stalin threatened that, without clear recognition, Mongolian leaders might be successful in their attempt to combine Inner and Outer Mongolia into a single Great Mongol State. Stalin was perhaps more aware than the others at the table that a Soviet–Mongol army might be capable of imposing such a state.

Three days later, on August 11, Harriman sent the full text of the Mongolian Government declaration of war against

Courtesy of U.S. National Archives

Averell Harriman, the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, would later become influential in the formulation of America's Cold War foreign policy.

Japan to his home office and explained this action as Outer Mongolia's attempt to show itself as a sovereign state (see p. 83). He emphasized the Mongolian intention of entering the war to unify all the Mongol tribes, including Inner Mongolia to the south and Manchukuo to the east, and warned that the MPR and Communists in China who controlled northern China would have a common border if the Mongolian intention came true. Harriman was even more concerned that Stalin now seemed to support Mongolian intentions. Washington considered Stalin's warning to unite Inner Mongolia with Outer Mongolia as a violation of the Yalta Agreement and saw this as Stalin's ambition to establish his influence over all Mongols. James Francis Byrnes, Secretary of State, instructed Harriman on the same day: 'Inner Mongolia should not be included under any conditions in Sino–Soviet agreement which will be signed within Yalta accord.' Accordingly, when they met, Harriman requested that Stalin respect America's open door policy in Manchuria and demand no further concessions from China after the latter accepted the idea of Outer Mongolian independence. The U.S. and Britain were united to prevent Stalin's apparent deviation from the Yalta Agreement.

At the same time, Stalin was using U.S. influence over China to get support for Outer Mongolia's independence. The Soviet leader seemed to agree that China could be under America's sphere of influence after the war as long as the U.S. recognized Outer Mongolia as an independent country. During a private meeting, the Chinese leader's son, Chiang Ching-kuo, who arrived in Moscow during the August negotiations, asked Stalin what third power could use Outer Mongolia in a war against the Soviets except China and Japan. Stalin answered, 'The United States.'

On the morning of 14 August, Soong informed Harriman that both sides agreed on all issues and expressed gratitude for strong U.S. support during the negotiations. The Soviet government's 17 August note to Washington said that the Chinese Government would recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia within its existing boundary after the Japanese surrender, considering the Mongolian people's desire for independence, if a plebiscite confirmed this wish.

Ravdan Bold

Slaughter and flight in Manchuria. With Soviet–MPR forces advancing more than 100 km a day, the Kwantung Army's strategy of defence in depth is in tatters. Only at Hailar is the resistance holding. Meanwhile, thousands of Japanese settlers – mainly women, children and the elderly – attempt to flee to safety but many are engulfed in the fighting or attacked by vengeful locals. Others choose mass suicide.

Soviet troops enter Dairen.

The fate of Japanese settlers in Manchuria

In August 1945, as Japan's empire abruptly collapsed, over three million civilians along with close to four million military personnel were living outside of Japan's home islands. The experience of defeat would prove to be as diverse as the empire itself, and the process of protecting and returning this massive population to Japan would prove to be one of the more pressing issues for the victor nations of the Second World War. Returning to Japan and reintegrating into a destroyed, occupied, rapidly reconstituted nation-state would not prove easy.

In the once bustling port city of Dairen, which for 40 years served as a symbol of Japan's imperial ambition and achievement as 'Manchuria's Gateway', the days immediately following the war brought an eerie calm. The city had largely escaped the bombing that had so devastated cities in Japan, and Dairen's 200,000 Japanese residents, along with 600,000 Chinese, waited to see what the future would hold. That calm was shattered by the outbreak of sporadic fighting between Chinese and Japanese residents, and by the arrival of Soviet military units, which swept through Manchuria and reached Dairen on 22 August.

Here, the Soviet military, which would remain in control until 1950, was responsible, along with their counterpart Chinese authorities, for the fate of the Japanese population. In the weeks after their arrival, the less disciplined Soviet troops indiscriminately raped and looted, and Japanese civilians were often the victim of these attacks. Many former Japanese military personnel were sent to Siberia, perhaps 750,000 in all and likely tens of thousands from

Dairen, 'Manchuria's Gateway' – detail from a 1940 postcard.

Dairen. Civilians faced an unknown situation, waiting for repatriation ships amidst the fear and anxiety of living in a now Soviet-occupied Chinese city swelling with Japanese refugees from Manchuria. Many of this latter population were born in the colonies, or had spent considerable portions of their lives in colonial cities like Dairen. What would life hold for them in occupied Japan? Could they stay where they had been living and working?

By choice or by order, industrial experts and advisors would in fact stay on in places like Dairen for a number of years after the war. Here they not only provided technical assistance, but actively participated in Soviet and Chinese Communist-backed ceremonies and speeches, emphasizing the transformative power of socialism – a potent form of socialist internationalist propaganda which hammered home the theme that through socialism, imperialist enemies could become socialist friends.

The vast majority of Japanese however, would be repatriated to Japan in 1946 and 1947. Life since 1945 had been traumatic for Japanese civilians. Port cities like Dairen swelled with refugees from Manchuria, many describing horrific scenes of fleeing both Soviet military violence and vengeance attacks from local Chinese. Many were forced to abandon children and were separated from family and loved ones. As their livelihoods collapsed with the empire's end, many civilians had little to do but try and survive and wait their turn to board repatriation ships.

Little did they know that this was the beginning of a painful journey back 'into' Japanese society. In the reconstitution of Japan after 1945, those who had lived or were born in the colonies were now labeled 'repatriates' (*hikiagesha*), a politicized category that served to mark them out from the rest of the Japanese population. This operated both legally, as official identity documents used this label, but also in terms of social attitudes and behaviour. In the complex process of internalizing defeat, society itself heaped scorn on the repatriates, who came to symbolize betrayal and national shame. Their experiences served as reminders that the process of decolonization would have human costs both in the former colonial territories and also within the homeland itself, a process that would continue for decades after August 1945.

Christian A. Hess

Evacuation orders were issued to settlers by the nearest government outpost on August 9, although no provisions were made to help with the evacuation. Settlers were simply advised to load up their possessions and a week's worth of food onto whatever transport was available and make their way south to one of several main cities. What followed was a period of living hell for the settlers.

Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*

Burmese troop integration halted. Following a two-day meeting with Burmese National Army district commanders, Burmese nationalist leader Aung San stops the agreed process of integrating BNA troops (now renamed Patriotic Burmese Forces) into the regular Burma Army and demands renegotiations. Frustration has been mounting over the treatment of PBF troops by British soldiers and officers of the Civil Affairs Service for Burma, CAS(B). Also notable has been the hostility shown towards Aung San by exiled British Governor Reginald Dorman-Smith and General William Slim, commander of the Allied campaign in Burma, their animosity alleviated by the personal support of the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia Command (SEAC), Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Vietnamese nationalists fail to seize Hanoi. After Dai Viet demonstrations in Hanoi the day before, other nationalists rally in the city in support of the royal government and call for unity among the people. Although next day another Dai Viet demonstration calls on the people to 'consolidate Vietnam's independence', a new meeting of Dai Viet cadres held on the 16th again fails to agree on concrete steps to thwart a Viet Minh takeover. By now, some Dai Viet troops have left their nearby rural redoubt and begun marching on Hanoi. Delayed by flooding, they reach the city only on the 17th and even then fail to receive orders to seize power.

Vietnam's fractured nationalist forces (1945–48)

The Vietnamese revolution that began in August 1945 was no simple affair. Although today the historical focus may be on the Viet Minh road to victory, back in 1945 many different paths to Vietnamese independence were visible. This fragmentation of the nationalist movement would have serious implications in the years to come.

To understand the complexity of relations among the various and competing Vietnamese independence groups involved in the revolutionary process to overthrow colonial rule, we must turn to southern China in March 1944. At this key moment, several political parties banded together to form the Vietnamese Revolutionary Alliance (DMH), the main united front working abroad for the independence of Vietnam. With the ambivalent support of Nationalist China and in collaboration with other nationalist groups inside the country, preparations began in March 1944 on how to take power. The Japanese coup of 9 March 1945 accelerated the

Flag of the Dai Viet Nationalist Alliance displaying three red stars on a yellow background.

Tran Trong Kim, Prime Minister of the Empire of Vietnam from 17 April to 20 August 1945. His government's main objectives were to eradicate hunger, reorganize and reunify the state and mobilize youth to support independence.

Truong Tu Anh (1914–46) founded the non-communist and fiercely anti-colonialist Greater Vietnam Nationalist Party in 1938, later one of the biggest Dai Viet parties. Anh was also the secret leader of the Front of Nationalist Parties, which included the VNQDD and Dai Viet. In 1946, with the outbreak of full-scale war in Vietnam, he disappeared and presumably was killed.

course of events by ousting overnight the French authorities who had ruled the divided country for eighty years. Within the country, revolutionary nationalists emerged in May in the form of the Quoc Dan Dang Front, an alliance including the Dai Viet Quoc Dan Dang, the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD) and the Dai Viet Duy Dan, with their maquis and training camps located near Hanoi (Kep, Lac Trieu, Bi Cho and Di Linh). The DMH sent their troops from China to Mong Cai in northern Vietnam, while Phuc Quoc forces gathered around Lang Son. Each group prepared its forces to march on Hanoi and claim independence. As for the Viet Minh/Indochinese Communist Party, a nascent army emerged on 22 December 1944 under Vo Nguyen Giap's leadership. This 'armed propaganda brigade' numbered 34 men and planned to fight against both the French and the Japanese enemies.

In the South, the nationalist and religious forces of Hoa Hao and Cao Dai also benefitted from the overthrow of the French and developed their own armed groups with strong Japanese support. While youth groups within Vietnam became militarized following the March coup, this was even more so the case for revolutionaries in southern China. The map of the anti-French resistance by March 1945 was thus multifaceted and largely favourable to the various nationalist groups committed to the regeneration of their nation in the form of the Empire of Vietnam and led by the Tran Trong Kim government.

The sudden surrender of Imperial Japan and collapse of Tran's government in August 1945 offered a unique opportunity for all the independence forces to take power by force. On 16 August though well equipped, the Dai Viet (Greater Vietnam) movement failed to take Hanoi because of fatal internal divisions. From its headquarters in Tan Trao, the Viet Minh front led by the communists called for a general insurrection on that same day. From 19 to 25 August, most centres of power from north to south fell into the hands of Viet Minh people's committees. In Hue, Emperor Bao Dai abdicated in favour of the insurgents, but called on them to respect those who had not participated in the revolutionary movement. He hoped to avoid a bloody settling of scores between Vietnamese groups.

The 'August Revolution' and its goal of national independence were supported by many political parties and large sectors of Vietnamese society. Both were the culmination of a process initiated in

March but rooted in changes dating from the mid-1920s. From the Viet Minh takeover of Hanoi on 19 August until the official birth of the provisional government on the 28th, a period of expectation prevailed in and among the different groups. No one really knew what the Viet Minh front wanted or was going to do. On 2 September 1945, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the independence of Vietnam and the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in front of an enthusiastic yet disciplined crowd. While it was time to rejoice and give free rein to nationalist pride, within a few days the new government found itself facing virulent opposition.

The first challenge to the legality of the new DRV government came from non-communist nationalists newly arrived from southern China. Their purpose was to oppose a regime that sought to exclude and suppress them. Indeed, already on 5 and 12 September, Vo Nguyen Giap had signed decrees outlawing pro-Japanese organizations and two Dai Viet parties. Political integration was not possible, or so it seemed. Between October and December 1945, the DMH league and VNQDD front, which together formed the bulk of the nationalist opposition north of the 16th Parallel, violently criticized the Viet Minh/ICP for both its dictatorial practices and its communist ideology. Under Chinese pressure and for tactical reasons, Ho Chi Minh dissolved the ICP on 11 November, even while casting the communists as the true defenders of Vietnamese independence. During this dangerous period from October to December 1945, three agreements were signed between the VNQDD, DMH and Viet Minh (see p. 276), each side pledging its commitment to join forces in the fight against colonialism. However, repeated calls for national unity could not mask the deep divisions between the different groups supporting independence nor the violence in society that increased between them (see p. 80). Communist-organized arrests and assassinations of their nationalist opponents and non-communist kidnapping of members of the Viet Minh became common.

By adopting the strategy of 'peace in order to advance' (*hoa de tien*), the communists intended to maintain power at all costs. For this reason, its leaders were prepared to negotiate secretly and directly with the French, whereas the nationalist opposition condemned such a policy. For the Viet Minh, however, the issue in the first months of 1946 was survival in the face of strong nationalist

9/8/45

HAI-PHONG

NHAT-BAO

Trach-nhiem cua moi nguoi

O. Yoshizawa

Loi tuyen-bo cua

DAI-VIET QUOC-XA DANG

Bat duoc 5 con voi cua giac Phap

Cong-chuc

Canh - sat

Hai Phong was the official newspaper of the Dai Viet National Alliance (Dai Viet Quoc Gia Lien Minh). The highlighted story from 9 August, 'Dai Viet Quoc-Xa Dang', urged supporters to oppose 'extremist elements' (including, but not naming, the Viet Minh). Two days later, the paper stoked fears of an imminent French return and called Dai Viet nationalists into the streets to oppose 'imperialist invasion plots'.

pressure. Thanks to its tight organization, the Viet Minh survived these nationalist attacks and was also able to undermine efforts to create a real coalition government in which non-communists would have some power.

On 6 January, the Viet Minh won a resounding victory in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's first contested elections. The communist core of the DRV took advantage of the legitimacy this result provided, placing reliable communists in key positions in order to control security services and maintaining their power as a new 'unity government' emerged from the first meeting of the National Assembly on 2 March 1946. In July 1946, as Chinese forces withdrew from northern Indochina and following the discovery of a coup d'état plot by the Dai Viet party, the ICP dispatched its special security forces against the nationalist opposition in a massive wave of repressions. As such, despite formation of a 'government of unity and resistance' and advent of a national assembly in which it was negotiated that 70 seats would be held by the opposition, a civil war was triggered both in Hanoi and in other war zones where resistance groups were active. Further, the communist-run National Guard (*Ve quoc doan*) attacked nationalist positions on the VNQDD Vinh Yen–Lao Cai axis and those of the DMH and Phuc Quoc from eastern Tonkin to the Chinese border. In some areas, this violent Viet Minh reconquest occurred with the support of French forces or their negotiated neutrality.

In the South, the situation was even more confusing. In early September 1945, conflict erupted between 'true' and 'false' Viet Minh, as well as between communist

Courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

Aerial view of the aftermath of Hiroshima, from an aerial reconnaissance undertaken on 12 August.

cadres and other independent forces. The British-backed French coup on the 23 September then ignited a war in the Mekong Delta, guerrilla warfare engulfing the outskirts of Saigon and spreading to much of the countryside. Although various political and military forces were willing to battle the French, they were hardly unified. A multiplicity of 'bo doi' armed groups, often competing with each other, characterized the anti-French resistance in the south. In response, Ho Chi Minh dispatched General Nguyen Binh, a former member of the VNQDD, to unify the resistance under the DRV's control but this attempt to forge national unity on communist terms backfired terribly. Worse yet, the communists had serious problems with religious and diverse ethnic groups, especially Khmer people in the Delta, who saw no reason to accept communist leadership of the anti-French resistance. The Viet Minh's subsequent decision to assassinate Huynh Phu So, the political and spiritual leader of the Hoa Hao in May 1947, would set the Vietnamese against each other in Tay Ninh, Chau Doc, Can Tho and other places in the Mekong Delta. Between 1947 and 1948, the French used these divisions to win over the support of some of the dissident forces belonging to the Viet Minh-led resistance in the south. As a result, the bulk of Hoa Hao, Cao Dai and Binh Xuyen rebel fighters crossed over to support the French-led Cochinchinese provisional government and fight alongside French troops against their erstwhile Viet Minh allies.

Thus from 9 March 1945, the day the Japanese overthrew the French colonial administration, until 23 September 1945 (when the French seized Saigon) and 19 December 1946 (the French attack on Hanoi), Vietnamese non-communist nationalists found themselves badly divided over communist moves to negotiate with the French and monopolize power within the DRV. With communist repression gradually pushing them to the margins of a neocolonial conflict, non-communist nationalists offered the image of a fractured and fragmented state, one that would persist until the State of Vietnam unified them in 1949 in association with the French. Worse still, the ideological divide established by the communists in its propaganda – casting non-communists as 'anti-revolutionaries', 'reactionaries' and 'traitors' – and the Leninist-derived coercive practices they used against them, plunged the country into civil war, factionalism and chaos for many years to come.

Francois Guillemot

Le Khang, a VNQDD leader who made frequent trips to Chungking to present his party's case both formally and informally to array of political actors there. Arrested by Viet Minh security forces in July 1946, he was executed along with other nationalists, probably in the beginning of 1947.

13 August

Japanese leaders deadlocked on surrender. With Japan's conditional surrender offer rejected, the Japanese leadership now faces the prospect of utter submission to the Allies and is strongly divided on the issue. There are even rumours of a military coup by army leaders seeking to fight to the end or hold out for better terms of surrender. Meetings continue into the night. The U.S. seeks to influence this debate by dropping leaflets over Japan, describing the Japanese offer of surrender and the Allied response.

Fighting to surrender

After the Potsdam Declaration on 26 July 1945, many Japanese began contemplating surrender. They felt that the war had turned against Japan, and it seemed unlikely any more that it could end in victory. Others, however, insisted that surrender was not an option and that Japan must fight to the end.

In the following weeks, a number of events pressed the issue: the Americans dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August; the Soviets, whom the Japanese had hoped would provide support, declared war on Japan on 8 August and invaded its client state of Manchuoko in the first minutes of the 9th; and the Americans dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki later that day.

The Supreme War Council and the Cabinet were split in their opinion on whether to surrender, the deadlock proving so intractable that they called on the Emperor himself to decide what to do. The Emperor informed the Cabinet that he gave his sanction 'to the proposal to accept the Allied Proclamation on the basis outlined by the Foreign Minister.' Thus, in the early morning hours of August 10 the decision to surrender was made, but the conditions of the surrender remained unsettled. The largest concern remaining was the fate of the Imperial line, because the Potsdam Declaration implied that the Emperor would no longer hold authority.

Tōgō Shigenori, Minister of Foreign Affairs, was a leading proponent of a peace deal.

13 August

At about 7:00 a.m., the Cabinet sent cables to Switzerland and Sweden for transmission to the Allied powers, saying that Japan was ready to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration with the caveat that they would not accept 'any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler.' Then they sat back and waited for the Allied reply.

Meanwhile, the Japanese public was aware of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration and anxious about how the Japanese government was responding. War Minister Anami issued a statement to the Japanese people insisting that Japan would continue to fight, no matter what. At the same time, the Cabinet issued a statement that the government was doing all it could, and called upon the people to do the same in the face of great hardship. Both statements were published in the newspapers on the morning of August 11, amidst continued American bombing of Tokyo.

The American reply came on 12 August. It said, in part, 'From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers … .' This was not what the Japanese had hoped for, and it began forty-eight hours of intense debate in the leadership. Although it was unclear whether 'subject to' meant 'controlled by' or rather 'obedient to', it was clear that the Emperor would have to relinquish his power. Various cabinet officers, military leaders, and imperial household members conferred about the next steps: there was vehement support for a continuation of the war and equally vehement support for surrender, even if it meant the end of the Imperial line. Ultimately, the Emperor called a meeting on 14 August to settle the matter: the American terms were acceptable.

Although the Emperor agreed that 'the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers,' some of the military leadership could not abide by this, and plans for a coup d'etat were set in motion in the final 24 hours before the planned Imperial radio broadcast that would announce the surrender (see p. 71).

Susanna Fessler

See also Hando et al 1980, PWRS 2002.

General Anami Korechika, Minister of the Army, was a steadfast opponent of Japan surrendering and may have discussed a military coup to prevent this.

CCP clarifies its postwar position. In a speech in Yen'an to his cadres on the situation after the war, Mao Tse-tung emphasizes his determination in the face of a likely future conflict with the KMT. Chu Teh therefore refuses to comply with Chiang's instruction to stand fast and await orders, and moves his troops toward Manchuria.

Photo Lt. René Défourneaux

Towards the end of the war, the U.S. Office of Strategic Services and Viet Minh collaborated closely, with the Americans providing military training and some arms. The training ceased when Japan surrendered, a final celebratory feast being held. Viet Minh leaders and OSS Deer Team members at Tan Trao. Ho Chi Minh is standing, third from left, and at centre Vo Nguyen Giap is wearing a white suit.

Photo: Hoàng Long - TL

Ho Chi Minh presiding over a Viet Minh meeting in Tan Trao.

Communists gather in Tonkin hills. An all-country conference of the Indochinese Communist Party begins in Tan Trao, centre of a liberated zone north-west of Hanoi, the first such conference held in five years. Reflecting the dramatic news of an imminent Japanese surrender and fears of both a French return and Chinese intervention, delegates resolve that both the Soviet Union and the United States be won over to the Vietnamese cause. In addition, a five-man 'Uprising Committee' is established and orders go out that lead to some attacks on Japanese forces. However, by the time the conference ends on the 16th, delegates agree on a policy of caution in the uncertain strategic situation.

14 August

Americans resume attacks on Japan. Lacking a response from Japan and suspecting it is about to launch a last suicidal attack, American forces launch a massive bombing operation throughout Japan, killing thousands and destroying the country's last operational oil refinery.

Cochinchina returns to Vietnamese rule. Upon receiving long-awaited formal Japanese agreement, Emperor Bao Dai proclaims abrogation of the treaties signed with France in 1862 and 1874, thus formally making Cochinchina a part of Imperial Vietnam. Nguyen Van Sam receives credentials as Southern Region Imperial Delegate, locates sufficient fuel for his automobile and begins the potentially perilous drive south. The same day in Saigon, Japanese officers are present at both the formation of a National United Front of groups opposed to the French return and an impressive ceremony of 50,000 Vanguard Youth dedicating their lives to the nation. On the 16th, the Japanese authorities begin handing over offices to the United Front. However, when Vanguard Youth then hijack a huge arms convoy, on his arrival in Saigon Nguyen Van Sam urges the Japanese to arm other groups less influenced by communists.

Japan accepts unconditional surrender. With the Japanese cabinet and Supreme Council both still split on surrendering to the Allies, Emperor Hirohito breaks the deadlock with his personal decision to accept the Allies' terms. This acceptance is signalled to Allies. Anticipating military resistance to this decision, the Emperor dispatches members of the imperial family as emissaries to key commanders in the field. They will carry copies of the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War, which is drafted during the day and recorded by the Emperor for broadcasting to the nation next day (see p. 73).

Emperor Hirohito recorded the Imperial Recript late on the 14th. It was this recording the coup plotters sought to find and destroy later that evening.

Nationalist premier appointed in Cambodia. Son Ngoc Thanh becomes prime minister, the first in Cambodian history. He assembles a new, largely unaltered cabinet and calls for resistance to France. Next day, in a wide-ranging speech, Thanh calls for continuing co-operation with Japan and with the 'yellow skinned' (*jaune*) inhabitants of Southeast Asia. The following week, Thanh's proposal of 'moral resistance' to France is unanimously approved in a cabinet meeting.

Son Ngoc Thanh

Heated debate on Indonesian independence. On returning to Jakarta from Dalat, Sukarno and Hatta first hear about the bombing of Nagasaki and that Japan is on the point of surrender. Days of intense discussions follow about the transition to independence. With news arriving of the Emperor's surrender speech, leftist youth leaders (*pemuda*) try to persuade Sukarno and Hatta to bypass the Japanese administration and make a 'revolutionary' declaration of independence.

France announces plans to block Thailand's UN membership. Thai officials learn via a radio broadcast from San Francisco that the French government will object to Thailand's application for membership in the United Nations, since it regards itself as being at war with Thailand. The USSR also announces its intention to object unless official Thai–Soviet relations are restored.

Sino–Soviet friendship treaty signed. In return for Soviet pledges of moral support and military aid given solely to the KMT regime as the central government of China, plus undertakings on Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity, Chinese envoys reluctantly sign a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance in Moscow. This grants the Soviets effective control of Dairen and Port Arthur along with extensive concessions in Manchuria. China also undertakes to recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia in its existing boundaries (i.e. Inner Mongolia is to remain part of China), subject to a positive referendum result.

Chiang invites Mao for peace negotiations. Chiang Kai-shek sends the first of three cables wired to Mao Tse-tung over a 10-day period, inviting him to talks in Chungking. In response, Mao insists that CCP forces should also accept the surrender of Japanese troops and the Party should play a leading role in a future coalition government. Mao says that he sees little point in formal negotiations if Chiang cannot take these two positions into serious consideration.

The 1945 Sino–Soviet Friendship Treaty and the status of Outer Mongolia

'The *status quo* in Outer-Mongolia (the Mongolian People's Republic) shall be preserved.' This Outer Mongolia clause agreed at Yalta has been blamed for helping Stalin pressure Chiang Kai-shek into granting Outer Mongolian independence. Chinese scholars blame Roosevelt for giving Stalin a powerful pretext for encroaching on Chinese national interests Western scholars even claim that Yalta demanded that the future of Outer Mongolia be settled by popular referendum. They are mistaken. In fact, the United States supported the Chinese interpretation. As the U.S. Ambassador to Moscow testified years later, Roosevelt had believed *status quo* meant Outer Mongolia was an integral part of China, as agreed in the 31 May 1924 Sino–Soviet treaty. Harriman further testified that once Sino–Soviet negotiations began, 'Stalin, at the outset, made demands that went substantially beyond the Yalta understanding.'

T. V. Soong, Chiang's brother-in-law as well as China's official envoy to Moscow during the 1945 Sino–Soviet negotiations, defended Washington's definition of *status quo* in talks with Stalin: 'When I left Washington I had no idea that Outer Mongolia question would be a problem … I said *status quo* was that juridical sovereignty remains with China.' But Soviet Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov demanded that Chiang recognize Outer Mongolia's independence: 'It's our formula. They signed. I am prepared to repeat

Soong Tse-ven

Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov signs the Sino–Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance in Moscow on 14 August 1945, Soong Tse-ven standing behind Molotov.

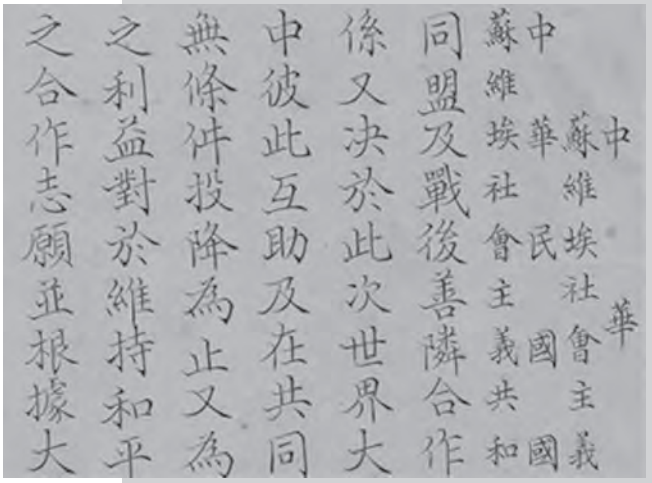
that. … Independence was meant.' Molotov was referring to the fact that since November 1924, six months after the treaty to which the Washington and Peking referred, Outer Mongolia declared itself 'independent' and could accurately be described as a Soviet puppet state. Sino–Soviet negotiations deadlocked.

Chiang's agreement to the granting of Outer Mongolian independence was made only after Stalin pledged that Soviet aid would be given only to the Nationalists. Thus, Chiang traded Outer Mongolian independence for Stalin's promise not to support the Chinese Communists. According to the Sino–Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance of 14 August 1945, 'the Government of the USSR agrees to render to China moral support and aid in military supplies and other material resources, such support and aid to be entirely given to the National Government as the Central Government of China.' Recently, S.C.M. Paine (2012) has demonstrated that Roosevelt did not betray China, but that 'Chiang Kai-shek traded Chinese sovereignty over Outer Mongolia for the return of Manchuria.'

Chiang also suggested holding a face-saving plebiscite. According to Soong, it would be 'more convenient for Chinese Government to confront Chinese people if there is a plebiscite.' This plebiscite was merely for form's sake, however, and Chiang did not dispute the results when it was reported that 98.14% of Outer Mongolia's electorate voted in the plebiscite, virtually all of them for independence. The Nationalist government thereafter recognized Outer Mongolia's independence on 1 January 1946.

When the People's Republic of China was formed in 1949, the Chinese Communists expected to regain Outer Mongolia. In 1936, Edgar Snow even quoted Mao Zedong: 'When the people's revolution has been victorious in China, the Outer Mongolian republic will automatically become a part of the Chinese federation, at their own will.' There is no reason to believe that Mao's position changed after he rose to power in 1949. Nonetheless, during Sino–Soviet negotiations conducted in Moscow during early 1950, Stalin refused to discuss this issue with Mao. As a result, Outer Mongolia remained little more than a Soviet puppet state through till the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s.

Bruce A. Elleman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中蘇維埃社會主義共和國
同盟及戰後善隣合作
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無條件投降為止又為
之利益對於維持和平
之合作志願並根據大

Text from the Chinese version of the Friendship Treaty.

See also Atwood 2005.

Mongols in former Manchukuo organize themselves. In former Manchukuo, Mongol leaders Hafungga and Buyanmandakhu form a Committee for Inner Mongolian People's Liberation. Working together with the Soviet–Mongolian Army, they soon establish a guard corps consisting of former cadets of the Hsingan Military Academy to maintain security in Wangin Sum, the centre of Mongolian administration under Manchukuo.

Coup attempt in Tokyo. Late in the evening, a group of junior military officers led by Major Hatanaka Kenji succeed in entering the Imperial Palace in an attempt to prevent the Emperor's surrender speech from being broadcast. The hidden gramophone record is not found. Despite their links to highly placed opponents of the surrender, by early morning next day their attempts to rally support against the Emperor's decision have failed.

The Kyūjō Incident: A night-time coup in Tokyo

On 9 August 1945, Emperor Hirohito decided to back his Foreign Minister's proposal and surrender to the Allied powers, on the sole condition that the imperial system would be preserved. This direct imperial decision, almost unprecedented in modern Japanese history, faced intense opposition from most military leaders. For good reasons, they feared that the army would not obey the order to surrender.

In prior decades, army officers had used their constitutional status as direct servants of the emperor as an excuse to defy government policy and even assassinate politicians who resisted them (see p. 3). The emperor rarely interfered in national policy, and his silence was often perceived as approval. Even individual commanders sometimes defied orders, claiming to have a better understanding of the 'imperial will' than their superiors.

Now, when the survival of the army itself was at stake, soldiers and officers were at odds about their future steps. Army Minister Anami and Chief of Staff Umezu, who felt bound by the direct imperial command, signed a document authorizing the surrender. Though he wavered and hesitated, Anami even said at one point that disobedience towards the emperor would occur 'only over my dead body.'

And yet, many diehards persisted. Led by Major Hatanaka Kenji, a contingent of junior officers convened in the Army Ministry's air raid shelter on 11 August and planned a coup against the emperor's 'traitorous advisers.' They intended to establish a new government,

Coup leader Hatanaka Kenji

headed by the army minister, that would continue to pursue ultimate victory at all costs.

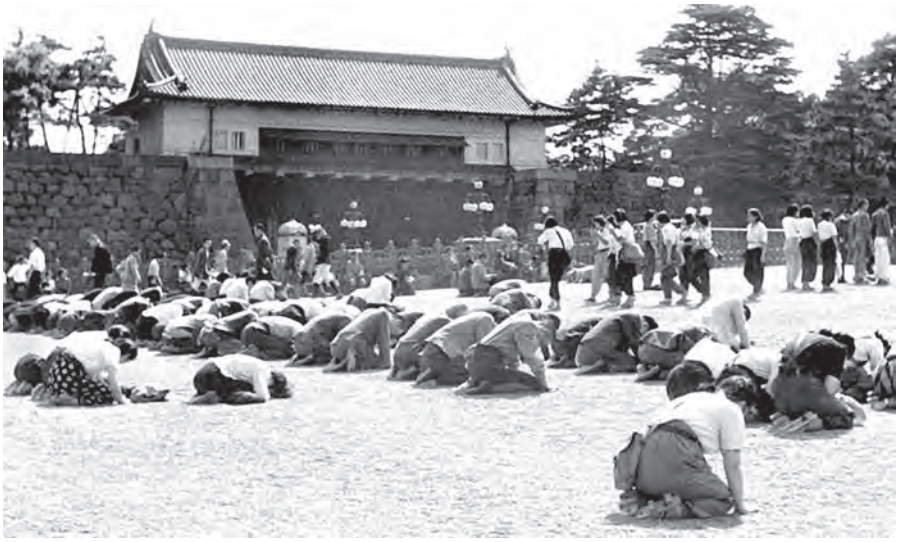
Three nights later, on August 14, they raided the Imperial Palace in an attempt to destroy the phonograph record of the emperor's surrender speech before it was broadcast. Hatanaka and his comrades knew well they were violating a direct imperial order, but they claimed loyalty to the imperial institution above all. In other words, they presumed to understand the imperial will better than the emperor himself.

I have nothing to regret now that the dark clouds have disappeared from the reign of the Emperor.
~ death poem of Hatanaka Kenji

As a first step, Hatanaka personally murdered the commander of the Imperial Guard Division that tried to resist the coup. But when the contingent entered the palace, they could not locate the phonograph record in the labyrinthine compound. While they were running around searching for it, General Tanaka Shizuichi, the commander of the eastern district army, mobilized the Imperial Guard and quashed the coup. Understanding that all was lost, Major Hatanaka and his fellow plotters committed suicide.

The fanaticism of the imperial army and its officers could not change the course of events on that night, just as the army could not win the war. The emperor's speech, broadcast the next day, signalled Japan's final surrender.

Danny Orbach



Japanese citizens listen to the Emperor's surrender speech outside the Imperial Palace.

15 August

Japanese emperor speaks to the nation. In a pre-recorded speech broadcast at midday, Emperor Hirohito reads the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War. This is the first time that ordinary Japanese have heard him speak. The audio quality is poor and most are baffled by the high court language used and absence of the word 'surrender' in his speech. However, this is clarified by a radio announcer afterwards. The Emperor's speech causes shock and despair among many, but also relief.

Japanese POWs on Guam after hearing the Emperor's speech

The Emperor's surrender broadcast

The Emperor's speech, announcing Japan's surrender, was recorded the evening before it was broadcast. The text was just over 800 characters in length, and was painstakingly copied out by scribes, one of whom erred by omitting a phrase that had to be inserted into the margin because re-copying would have taken too much time.

The language of the speech was formal, as was befitting the Emperor, but consequently not the everyday Japanese that was familiar to the populace. Moreover, the choice of words was vague: the word 'surrender' does not appear. Rather, the Emperor informed his subjects that Japan must 'pave the way for a grand peace … by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is unsufferable.'

The broadcast was made at noon on August 15, and the public had been told in advance to listen to it. There was much anticipation about what the Emperor would say, and much concern because it was the first time the Japanese public would ever hear his voice. The unprecedented nature of the broadcast indicated that whatever was to be said

Prevailing opinion had it that the Emperor would announce commencement of an Allied invasion of the Home Islands. The populace would be told to brace for the imminent onset of ground combat and to steel themselves for the likelihood of their own deaths in the fighting.

~ M.G. Sheftall

would be of utmost importance. However, the vagueness and formality of the language, combined with the relatively poor sound quality of the broadcast, left many listeners confused about the speech's import.

Even with clarification, the reality that Japan had surrendered in a war that it had fought for years with total determination seemed impossible to many Japanese. It took some people hours, some days, to reconcile themselves to their situation. In addition, many feared retribution under the American Occupation and wondered about the future role of the Emperor and the structure of the Japanese government. These emotions were mixed with relief at the end of hostilities and the promise of reconstruction.

Susanna Fessler

Defeat and despair

News of the emperor's speech and Japan's surrender was met with shocked disbelief, even anger, among many of the millions of Japanese troops serving abroad. But most continued to do their duty, even if it meant keeping order and a delayed return home until their victorious enemies could take charge of repatriation, which for political as well as logistical reasons was often delayed for months and even years. For civilians back home in Japan, defeat was equally shocking and across the country a mood of despair began to spread.

虚脱状態
kyodatsu jōtai
'state of lethargy'

On the morning after the emperor's surrender broadcast, farmers in Kanagawa prefecture did something unprecedented: they slept late. What is one to make of this? Had years of physical and emotional exhaustion caught up with them? Was this collective behaviour an all too human response to the shock of defeat? Is it best seen as a homely harbinger of the enervating '*kyodatsu* condition'? Surely, the farmers' fatigue was all of these.

Acknowledging defeat *was* traumatic, and this trauma found immediate expression in a rhetoric of despair. People spoke of the 'shame and dishonour' of unconditional surrender. For many, sudden confrontation with the hitherto unspeakable words *maketa senso* – 'lost war' – was almost stupefying. Since the early 1930s, the Japanese had been told they were a 'great country' and a 'great empire,' a 'leading race' destined to overthrow Western imperial-

ism and bring about a 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,' a people possessed of a unique and indomitable 'Yamato spirit.'

Now, what could one say to the war dead? How was one supposed to survive, spiritually as well as materially, in the midst of such a stupendous abandonment of purpose? Any people mobilized to fight a holy war and then, after prolonged sacrifice, told that they had been totally defeated, that it was now incumbent on them to go along with whatever the victor commanded, might have responded similarly. However elusive the term *kyodatsu* might have been, little was peculiarly Japanese about the state of depression and disorientation it described insofar as the immediate psychic numbing of defeat was concerned.

To attribute the '*kyodatsu* condition' simply to the shock of defeat would be misleading, however, for exhaustion of a deep and complex sort had set in long before 15 August 1945 as a result of the government's policy of wasting its people in pursuit of impossible war objectives. In the final year of the war, the secret records of the police as well as diaries from the privileged elites were shot through with expressions of apprehension concerning the war weariness and declining morale of the populace. Similarly, the fact that exhaustion and despondency lasted for years did not so much reflect the lasting trauma of defeat as the manner in which

wartime fatigue was compounded by incompetence and outright corruption on the part of the post-surrender leadership. In the long view of history, Japan rebounded quickly from defeat. For ordinary people, however, the postwar recovery seemed agonizingly slow.

It is a testimony to human resilience that the great majority of Japanese transcended exhaustion and despair to refashion their lives in diverse and often imaginative ways. Some took years to do so. Some threw off the psychological prostration of *kyodatsu* within days. Others never succumbed to it at all. They experienced the sense of liberation and opportunity from the moment they heard the scratchy recording of the emperor's voice. People splurged on a fancy meal or a special celebratory dish such as *sekihan* (boiled white rice with red beans). They hastened to remove the blackout paper from their windows, letting light back into their lives. Millions of them began to consider what it might mean to create a private life free from the dictates of the state.

John W. Dower

Material extracted from Dower 1999, pp. 104–105 and 121.

Last kamikaze attack. Japanese Admiral Ugaki Matome, commander of kamikaze forces defending the Japanese home islands, blames himself for the failure of his aviators to stop the enemy. Noting that he has not yet received 'official' cease-fire instructions, Ugaki orders and joins a last kamikaze mission against the enemy. None of the planes reach their target.

Admiral Ugaki Matome poses with his plane before his final mission

The last kamikaze

During the long hours after Emperor Hirohito's surrender radio broadcast, officers and men on military bases and naval ships throughout the Japanese Empire awaited further instruction in a state of confusion, agitation and, for those unable or unwilling to accept what they had just heard, a crushing sense of loss of purpose and will to live. At 4:00 pm, official orders to 'stand down' were simultaneously broadcast over the Imperial Army's and Navy's respective communications networks.

But not everyone in uniform was comfortable with the idea of continuing to live in a defeated Japan. At Ōita Naval Air Base in northern Kyushu, Vice Admiral Ugaki Matome informed his staff of his intention to die in a kamikaze suicide attack on Allied shipping moored off Okinawa, flying in one of five two-seater Suisei attack planes he had ordered readied for a mission earlier in the morning. His other staff officers desperately pleaded for him to change his mind, saying that postwar Japan would need men like the Vice Admiral to help rebuild the country, but Ugaki would have none of it. Ceremoniously stripping the insignia of rank off of his uniform, putting on white gloves and taking along a short sword (a gift from the legendary Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku), he muttered 'Give me a place where I can die as a warrior'. Walking out of the command shack to the flight line, Ugaki found not five – as he had ordered – but all eleven of the base's operational Suisei aircraft armed, gassed up and ready for action. Ugaki 'bumped' one

Flowers of the special attack are falling
When the spring is leaving.
Gone with the spring
Are young boys like cherry blossoms.
Gone are the blossoms,
Leaving cherry trees only with leaves.
~ Ugaki Matome, 22 June 1945

15 August

Allied prisoners freed in China. Long before Shanghai is liberated, thousands of British, Dutch and American internees are freed in the city. Next day, an OSS operation begins to liberate Allied POWs in northern China. This succeeds within a few days but a similar operation in Korea ends in failure.

Chinese government sends orders to surrendering Japanese. In response to the official Japanese surrender, Chiang Kai-shek instructs General Okamura Yasuji, commanding Japanese forces in central China, to implement a ceasefire but maintain order until further notice.

In Shanghai, Japanese troops continue to keep order but a huge crowd celebrates victory over Japan.

of the crewmen – a radioman/rear gunner named Endo – to open a seat for himself. But just before the admiral closed the canopy, Endo clambered back onto the aircraft and forced himself into the cramped cockpit with Ugaki.

At 4:30 pm, the flight of eleven Suisei planes took off from Ōita in the direction of Okinawa. Over the next several hours, three of the planes straggled back to base with reported engine trouble while the remaining eight planes pressed on with their unofficial (and thus unauthorized) mission. At 7:24 pm, the radio shack at Ōita received a message from Ugaki's Suisei tapped out in Morse code by Radioman Endo: 'WE ARE GOING IN'. Neither Ugaki nor any of the other Suisei crewmen were ever heard from again.

The fate of the Imperial Japanese Navy's 'last kamikaze' has never been confirmed. Allied forces reported no damage from kamikaze attacks on that day, but a flight of 'seven or eight' Japanese aircraft was reported shot down by a patrol of American night fighter planes off the island of Iheyajima around the time of Endo's radio transmission.

M.G. Sheftall

I trust that the members of all units under my command will understand my motives, will overcome all hardships of the future, and will strive for the reconstruction of our great homeland that it may survive forever.

Long live His Imperial Majesty the Emperor!

~ Ugaki Matome, final radio broadcast while en route to his target, 15 August 1945

Interim Korean administration agreed. Japanese authorities, concerned to safeguard Japanese lives and property until Allied forces arrive, seek to form an interim administration in Korea controlled by Koreans. There are few suitable candidates. Concerned to safeguard the position of the exiled Korean Provisional Government in Chungking, the approach is rejected by the rightist, Song Chinu. However, their proposal is hesitantly accepted by the prominent nationalist and moderate leftist, Yŏ Unhyŏng, on the condition that political prisoners are released and there is no further Japanese interference in Korean affairs.

Yŏ Unhyŏng

Khuang Aphaiwong

Surrender decision explained to Thai allies. Just four hours after Emperor Hirohito's broadcast ending the war, Japanese Ambassador Yamamoto Kuma'ichi explains and reassures Thai Prime Minister Khuang Aphaiwong about the surrender. He also raises no objections to news that Thailand's Regent is planning to renounce the Thai–Japanese alliance.

Between alliances in Bangkok

At 2 p.m. Bangkok time, four hours after Emperor Hirohito's broadcast announcing an end to the war, Japanese Ambassador Yamamoto Kuma'ichi met Thai Prime Minister Khuang Aphaiwong to explain the surrender and assure him that the Japanese forces in Thailand would obey the Emperor's command. Khuang, fearing a negative Japanese reaction to a plan by Regent Pridi Phanomyong to publicly renounce the Thai–Japanese alliance, took the opportunity to sound out Yamamoto about such a move. The Ambassador, who wished to avoid prejudicing future bilateral relations, raised no objection, giving the Thai a green light to improve their position with the victorious Allies in any way they could.

The meeting came after several tense days in Bangkok. When international broadcasts revealed that Japan had conditionally accepted the Potsdam Declaration demanding surrender, several key officers in the Thailand-based 39th Army had voiced opposition, including the controversial Operations Chief Col. Tsuji Masanobu. Tsuji had flown to Saigon to lobby unsuccessfully against sur-

Revolt spreads in Vietnam. Faced with growing disorder across the country, the flight or murder of local mandarins and desertion of Civil Guard troops, an imperial decree establishes a special court to try and punish 'gangs of traitors'. This action has no effect on the spreading unrest as groups calling themselves Viet Minh begin to seize power in many provincial and district seats. Indochinese Communist Party members are active in some local takeovers, not in others. For months, the ICP Central Committee has been unable to make contact with many of its cells. There are also tensions between recent recruits and 'old' ICP members returning from prison. Amid calls for punishment of 'traitors', rivalry between different groups sometimes turns deadly (see overleaf). Political assassinations and murder of captured opponents rise, especially in Saigon. Faced with such a dangerous situation, the leaders of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious movements declare a non-aggression pact.

render at Southern Area Army general headquarters. On the other hand, the 18th Area Army Commander Lt.-Gen. Nakamura Aketo, who had cooperated closely with Ambassador Yamamoto and maintained friendly liaison with the Thai authorities, had stated that an order from the Emperor would be obeyed.

Immensely relieved by the Ambassador's reassurance and his cooperation, Khuang and other leaders socialized freely and sympathetically with Yamamoto, Nakamura and other Japanese officials before the arrival of British occupation forces. Such fraternizing greatly irritated American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) officers who had been operating underground in Bangkok, leading them to question the sincerity of the Thai commitment to the Allied cause.

The Japanese command maintained discipline, and the roughly 100,000 soldiers who were either stationed in Thailand or retreated there from Burma posed no problems for the Thai government over the months while they awaited repatriation in 1946. A few Japanese soldiers deserted and remained quietly in Thailand. Tsuji, a prime war crimes suspect, went underground with a few young officer colleagues, entering a Bangkok temple as monks. Tsuji later escaped overland to Nationalist China, where he volunteered his services to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government.

Bruce Reynolds

Tsuji Masanobu was a leading proponent of the concept of 'loyal insubordination'. Among the most aggressive and influential Japanese militarists, he incited the 1939 Nomonhan War with the Soviets and was a vehement advocate of war with the United States.

Deadly rivalries

For much of Asia, 1945 marked an important geopolitical crossroads. The year saw not just the end of a long, bloody world war but also the emergence of new nationalist movements fuelled by the flame of independence and often revolutionary in their nature. A desire for revenge against officials and settlers from the old colonial power was especially seen in eastern Asia, attacks on the Japanese in Manchuria (see p. 57) and Dutch in Indonesia (p. 272) being good examples.

This revolutionary effervescence was not only directed against the old imperial order; it also gave rise to an intense and bloody settling of scores between competing parties or against those arbitrarily branded as 'traitors'. Mass killings and the assassination of political leaders became commonplace during the war and in its aftermath, not least in Korea, China and Burma but also in Vietnam long before the French began their war of reconquest.

In August 1945, only five months after the Japanese had overthrown the French administration in Indochina, many different groups prepared to fill the political vacuum created when Japan surrendered. Although histories of Vietnam tend to focus on the rise to power of the communist-led Viet Minh with Ho Chi Minh to the fore, at the time it was only one of many forces vying for power, albeit the only one benefiting from the military and financial support of the American OSS. Noteworthy opponents and occasional allies were the faltering imperial order under Emperor Bao Dai, non-communist nationalists like the VNQDD (Vietnamese Nationalist Party) and various Dai Viet factions, revolutionary groups like the Vanguard Youth and Trotskyists, and religious movements like the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao. Moreover, the Viet Minh itself was a league embracing many disparate, often conflicting, local forces.

Added to the toxic mix of intense group rivalries in Vietnam were a faltering royal administration, peasant land seizures, the aftermath of a devastating famine earlier in the year and threat of another crop failure, uncertainty about what the Allied occupation would bring and fears of a French return. Nor were murder and violence a new phenomenon in nationalist circles. Already in the 1920s, the proto-communist Thanh Nien founded by Nguyen Ai Quoc in Canton saw the VNQDD as its most dangerous competitor and targeted its supporters. For its part, the VNQDD led a hunt against 'infiltrators' in its own organization. French repression before and during the war helped radicalize these groups and heighten the culture of suspicion and violence.

However, only after the end of the Japanese-imposed order and simultaneous paralysis of Bao Dai's government did the political rivalries in Vietnam become especially deadly. Viet Minh death squads eliminated countless 'enemies of the revolution', be they royalist officials, nationalist competitors, bourgeois intellectuals or others not enamoured with

Mountbatten's remit extended. The operational boundaries of the British-led South East Asia Command (SEAC), based in Kandy and headed by Lord Louis Mountbatten, are extended to include southern Indochina and Thailand. Java, Borneo and Eastern Indonesia are also transferred from the American-led South-West Pacific Area, Australia made responsible for the latter two. With the war ended, SEAC's primary tasks are to accept the Japanese surrender, disarm and repatriate Japanese troops, rescue and repatriate Allied POWs and internees, and eventually hand over the administration to civilian authorities. Except for Thailand, the restoration of colonial rule is assumed.

British plans for reoccupation of Malaya. The promulgation of Proclamation No. 1 by Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia Command (SEAC), lays the basis for a British Military Administration (BMA) in Malaya that will govern the territory until the resumption of civilian rule. However, Britain cannot officially reoccupy its colony until after the official surrender ceremony in Tokyo on 2 September. In the meantime, reports are received of outbreaks of Malay–Chinese communal violence in Perak and Johor.

communism. Abduction and murder by anti-communist groups were also rife, and mass graves were common in both camps. The Mekong Delta became especially violent, the collapse of state authority being compounded by religious conflicts, ethnic strife between Khmer and Vietnamese, and the presence of several armed groups. Revolutionary violence reached frightening proportions further north in the province of Quang Ngai where, in addition to more than 2,500 Cao Dai followers later remembered as being murdered by local Viet Minh, it is likely that captives from several other groups were killed as well.

In recent times, Vietnamese historians have regretted the excessive actions of a few, often rogue elements in the Viet Minh; in 1946 a leading communist, Truong Chinh, saw matters differently. While admitting that events in Quang Ngai 'got out of hand', he criticized the approach of the revolutionary government to its enemies as 'spineless'.

Over the next few years, tens of thousands of Vietnamese people would die from revolutionary or counter-revolutionary violence, many from the traditional elite and new educated classes especially targeted. Not only did the Leninist policies of the communists/Viet Minh aggravate these internal divisions and facilitate French moves in the North but also they suppressed the emergence of an alternative vision of Vietnamese independence that might have offered a kinder future. Hence, the first steps towards national independence in 1945 were made at the price of a serious national divide that plunged Vietnam and the wider Indochinese region into a fratricidal war lasting thirty years and costing millions of lives.

François Guillemot

See also Guillemot 2012.

16 August

National People's Congress opens in Vietnam. Immediately following the all-country conference of the Indochinese Communist Party in Tan Trao, about 60 delegates gather there to establish a provisional government. The congress is under Viet Minh leadership but Viet Minh–ICP linkages are downplayed. Few delegates are aware that Ho Chi Minh, who takes a leading role at the congress, is the legendary Comintern agent and ICP founder, Nguyen Ai Quoc. They elect a Liberation Committee chaired by Ho, endorse the Viet Minh banner as the national flag, and adopt Van Cao's 'Advancing Army' march as the national anthem (the last two decisions subsequently challenged by nationalists). The congress ends quickly so that everyone can return to their localities to take part in the seizure of power.

Koreans take control. Immediately following Yŏ Unhyŏng's agreement with the Japanese, a Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) is established under his leadership. With CPKI encouragement, local people's committees are formed that gradually replace the old Japanese administration and, together with associated volunteer police forces, maintain law and order throughout the country.

Fighting continues in Manchuria despite Japanese surrender. Although the Kwantung Army commander-in-chief orders them to lay down their arms, several Japanese divisions to continue to fight due to poor communications or outright defiance. Next day, Stalin orders his commander to continue the advance despite Japanese requests to organize a surrender. Several pockets of resistance are bypassed as the Soviets race to seize as much territory as possible before a ceasefire. Many Japanese civilians trying to retreat to the south also die, often by suicide (or killed by their parents) to avoid capture by Red Army troops.

Yŏ Unhyŏng addresses a meeting of the CPKI in Seoul.

Photo: TASS

Unsurprisingly, Soviet news agencies like TASS showed Red Army troops receiving a warm welcome from locals in Manchuria. The reality was more nuanced.

'Uninvited' war and the Mongol trophy

The Republic of China invited only the Soviet Union to enter the war against Japan. The Soviets, without legal authority to do so, invited the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) to fight alongside them. In one sense, MPR participation in the war against fascist Japan was natural, for the MPR had stood steadfastly with the Soviet Union on both western and eastern fronts. Yet, it is also accurate to describe the MPR's purpose in joining the 'Liberation War' as not just to defeat fascist Japan, but also to incorporate Inner Mongolia into the MPR. Moreover it was intended as a show of force compelling the Chinese government to recognize MPR independence. These purposes were clear from the day the MPR declared war (see p. 51) and, from China's perspective, they were unwelcome.

Following the Japanese announcement of surrender, the KMT, CCP, MPR and Soviet armies all raced to control as much land as possible. Their efforts were shaped by General Order No. 1, which ordered Japan to surrender directly to the Soviet Union in Manchuria and to the Republic of China in the rest of China. This order excluded both the MPR and the CCP.

On 17 September, the Soviet Union chose officially to invite the CCP into the historical lands of Inner Mongolia. This action was inconsistent with the spirit of the General Order and in direct contravention of the recently signed Sino–Soviet Friendship treaty (see p. 55). However, the Soviets chose a different approach with regard to their Mongolian allies. When Chiang Kai-

shek discovered on 17 August that the MPR army intended to march southward to occupy Peiping and Tientsin, he ordered the 12th War Zone to meet the Soviet and MPR armies and instructed the Chinese Ambassador to the Soviet Union to ask the Soviet government to order the MPR army not to advance southward. The Soviet government did not reply until 22 August, when it stated: 'We have no intention of marching into Peiping and [Kalgan] … When the army of Generalissimo Chiang arrives at those places, we will hand over those places to the army of Generalissimo Chiang.'

In addition to territory, control of prisoners of war was also an issue. The Soviet Union and the MPR saw Japanese POWs as a useful source of labour. On 21 September, MPR soldiers entered Jehol [Rehe] and captured over 2,000 surrendered Japanese soldiers and confiscated their weapons 'in violation of international convention'. Between 23 November and 10 December, 12,318 Japanese POWs were brought to Mongolia. These soldiers stayed in Ulaanbaatar until mid-October 1947. They helped build the Government Building, Sukhbaatar Square, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Building, the National University of Mongolia, and many other buildings which still stand today as representatives of Soviet era architecture.

In addition to these Japanese POWs, less known were hundreds of Inner Mongolian POWs. They were former soldiers of Manchukuo or the Mongolian Autonomous State. Without discrimination, these soldiers were arrested as POWs and brought into Mongolia, many spending 4–5 years in prison before they were released and granted MPR citizenship. Unlike those who entered into Mongolia in groups, such as the Ujemchin Mongols from Shilinggol and Barga Mongols from Hulunbuir, these Inner Mongolian POWs were treated harshly. Due to the intra-Mongol morality for not washing the dirty linen in public, their suffering in Mongolia has never been studied in depth. It remains a mystery as to what the pan-Mongol-oriented MPR leadership intended to achieve by punishing those Inner Mongol youths who put down their weapons and enthusiastically welcomed the MPR forces as liberators.

What did Mongolia gain from this war? From the Chinese government perspective, MPR participation was uninvited and was thus 'illegal'. And yet, at a time when world order was maintained through force, Mongolia's biggest trophy in its uninvited war against Japan was its own independence. The 'illegal' capture of the Japanese POWs, whose forced labour helped to rebuild Ulaanbaatar, also helped to foster Japanese friendship; the Japanese POWs were treated with respect. This achievement may eventually compensate for the loss of Inner Mongolia.

Uradyn E. Bulag

AFPFL meeting demands firm steps towards Burmese independence. A three-day conference of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), the umbrella organization pushing for Burmese independence, begins at the Naythuyain Theatre on Kandawgyi Lake in Rangoon. With Aung San in the chair as acting president, the assembly calls for the establishment of a provisional national government and national elections for a constituent assembly after the end of the British military administration. Delegates also demand the rebuilding of a permanent Burmese Army with resistance troops and the Patriotic Burmese Forces at its core.

Thakin Soe was, together with Aung San, a founding member of the Communist Party of Burma. As president of the AFPFL in 1945, he was a potential rival to Aung San for leadership of the Burmese nationalist movement. However, issues relating to Thakin Soe's private life led to his absence from the Naythuyain conference. With Aung San thus able to assert his own position at the conference, the leading role of communists in the AFLFP was undermined at a crucial time.

Setting the stage for the final struggle – the Naythuyain conference

From 16–19 August 1945, at the peak of the rainy season, members of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) came together at the Naythuyain Theatre on Kandawgyi Lake in Rangoon. It was the first public gathering of the anti-colonial umbrella organization, which had started out in 1944 as a clandestine alliance of communists, the Burmese National Army (BNA) and the socialist People's Revolutionary Party against Japanese occupation. In an opening statement, the AFPFL's General Secretary tried to evoke hope that a peaceful world order, one granting freedom to all countries, was imminent. After all, the 'forces for democracy' had defeated the 'forces of fascism.' All of the big nations had come together in San Francisco to form a new league of nations.

Most AFPFL members, however, could not have cared less about San Francisco and world peace. Burma was facing the restoration of British colonial rule after the end of the transitional military administration, without any prospects for independence in the near

future. A few months earlier, during the anti-Japanese resistance, the thirty-year-old commander of the BNA, Bogyoke (Major-General) Aung San, had intended to prevent a return of colonial rule by all means, if necessary with a continuation of armed struggle. A shrewd strategist and political realist, he reckoned that the strength of his troops and their successful contribution in the fight against the Japanese gave the AFPFL bargaining power vis-à-vis the Allies. Hence, in the first meeting after the end of the resistance with General Slim, the commander of the 14th Army of the Allied Land Forces, he introduced himself as the military representative of the Provisional Government of Burma. He demanded recognition of his army as an ally of equal status.

[T]he AFPFL is not the communist party ... This organization was formed by people who wanted to fight the Japanese who were sucking the blood of the people and abusing us holding out the freedom that had neither fat nor meat. These people are from various parties, ethnicities, religions who wanted to unite and fight for real independence.

~ Aung San, 19 August 1945

Yet, when General Slim rejected these demands and presented tougher terms of cooperation, including the subordination of BNA troops under the British military administration, the AFPFL leadership after some deliberation accepted without fuss. The position of the much older, influential communist president of the AFPFL, Thakin Soe, had prevailed. Soe had recently embraced Browderism; that is, that revolutionary means were no longer necessary. Independence and eventually communism could be attained by working within the given political system.

Now, three months later at Naythuyain, tangible tensions had built up within the AFPFL against the communists. Peaceful cooperation had yielded no political gains, and resistance units were about to be dissolved or integrated in the colonial Burma Army. Ironically, AFPFL president Thakin Soe had discarded Browderism after consulting Indian communists and called now for an armed struggle. But this was Aung San's moment. Thakin Soe was absent, temporarily ousted by his own party over charges of bigamy, so Aung San chaired the meetings and was determined to claim political leadership and recalibrate the AFPFL strategy. Two important Naythuyain resolutions were passed. One called for a provisional national government after the end of the military administration and the holding of general elections for a constituent assembly. The second, tabled by Aung San and tactically more significant, called for a new Burma Army with the resistance troops as its core. He was obviously most keen to keep 'his' troops intact. They were his strongest leverage vis-à-vis the British.

16 August

By 19 August, the last day of the meeting, it was clear that Aung San would lead the independence struggle. Thousands came to hear 'Bogyoke's' first public speech since the end of the war. One wooden platform even collapsed under the weight of people. Aung San promoted himself as the one who could unify the movement and nation beyond party lines and ideological, religious and ethnic differences. 'The people just believed him', observed the writer Mya Daung Nyo.

Naythuyain brought the lingering power struggle with the communists into the open, eventually leading to their expulsion from the AFPFL in October 1946. More importantly, Aung San regained the initiative here. It took another seventeen months for him to negotiate the transfer of power in London and head the provisional government, but his pressure on the British never ceased. He used the strategy he had favoured all along; political demands punctuated with threats of armed struggle.

Susanne Prager-Nyein and Tun Kyaw Nyein

Aung San in BNA uniform.

Thailand's war declarations deemed unconstitutional. Thai Regent Pridi Phanomyong issues a 'peace declaration' that renounces his country's 1942 declaration of war against the Allies. This was against the will of the Thai people, he declares, and thus unconstitutional.

President of Chinese Chamber of Commerce assassinated in Bangkok. A machine-gun-wielding assailant assassinates Ch'en Shou-ming in Bangkok, in apparent retaliation for Ch'en's role in overseeing cooperation with the Japanese during the war. The attack comes as Chinese in Bangkok celebrate Japan's defeat by flying the Nationalist flag, setting off fireworks and parading in the streets.

Pridi Phanomyong

Thai–Chinese relations under pressure

The substantial and economically significant Chinese community in Thailand had endured severe pressure from both the Thai Government and the Japanese during World War, while at the same time a number of local Chinese had reaped handsome profits by selling goods to the Japanese army. Naturally this incongruous situation had built up tensions within the Chinese community that burst into the open with news of Japan's surrender in August 1945. Loyal supporters of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Chinese government set off fireworks and paraded in Bangkok, expressing both their joy over Japan's defeat and their contempt for the Thai government that had allied itself with China's bitter enemy.

On one hand, the Japanese had naturally distrusted the Chinese in Thailand, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, because of their patriotic support of Nationalist China's cause in the Sino–Japanese war. However, since the Chinese dominated Thailand's economy, the Japanese soon realized that they could not simply suppress or ignore them. As Thailand became a vital supply base for the Japanese Army's operation in Burma, the Japanese had no choice but to mix some carrots with their sticks in order to induce Chinese cooperation. The local Chinese Chamber of Commerce oversaw the effort to placate the Japanese, permitting a number of local Chinese to add to or build fortunes as war contractors and suppliers.

On the other hand, Thai concern about the rise of Chinese nationalism had developed from early in the century when King Vajiravudh (r. 1910–1925) had dubbed the Chinese the 'Jews of the East.' Thais particularly resented the large remittances sent to relatives in China, which they felt drained funds from the local economy. They also feared the local Chinese might become a 'fifth column,' loyal to their country of origin rather than to Thailand. Measures by the Phibun Songkhram government to bar Chinese from designated occupations and certain strategic areas had further intensified Chinese resentment toward the Thai government.

On the day after Japan's surrender, a machine-gun-wielding assassin killed Chinese Chamber of Commerce President Ch'en Shou-ming, in apparent payback for his cooperation with the Japanese. At the time, Nationalist China's enthusiasts in Bangkok hopefully anticipated that at least part of Thailand would be occupied by Chinese troops,

Led by the nationalist Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram from 1938, Thailand recovered its lost territories (see p. 153). Increasingly, however, Phibun's wartime alliance with the Japanese was seen to be a liability. Phibun was ousted in 1944 but by 1948 had returned to power.

Malay activists confer. Ibrahim Yaacob, a Malayan independence activist who had been in negotiations with Sukarno, Hatta and the Japanese over the inclusion of Malaya in an independent 'Greater Indonesia', convenes an emergency meeting of Malay activists in Kuala Lumpur.

Ibrahim Yaacob

Sukarno and Hatta kidnapped. Humiliated by their failure to achieve an immediate declaration of independence, radical *pemuda* seize Sukarno and Hatta in the small hours, taking them to a garrison of Indonesian military trainees (Peta) at Rengasdengklok, east of Jakarta. The stalemate is only broken when Japanese Admiral Maeda Tadashi promises the youth leaders that he will support and protect an independence proclamation as soon as Sukarno and Hatta are returned.

believing that this would force the Thai Government to modify its past policy of avoiding formal recognition of the Chinese Government. The Thai had long feared that a resident Chinese ambassador would inevitably meddle in Thailand's domestic affairs by advocating for interests of the Chinese community. The resident Chinese certainly hoped that would be the case.

The anticipated occupation did not come, but as tensions rose between Thai and Chinese, gun fights broke out in Bangkok's Chinese district on September 20th between armed citizens and the Thai police. A few days later, as clashes continued, Chinese merchants declared a general strike. The tense situation persisted for a month, although violence gradually subsided as both sides took actions to de-escalate the conflict. Casualty figures recorded 27 dead on the Chinese side and at least nine on the Thai side. Many others were injured.

In the end, the Thai Government had no choice but to normalize relations with Nationalist China as part of the war settlement, but the window of opportunity for any active role in Thailand would prove narrow, as China soon descended into civil war and four years later Chiang Kai-shek would retreat to Taiwan. With the Chinese Communist Party in power on the Chinese mainland, the Thai Government had a new excuse for avoiding diplomatic relations. Nonetheless, the postwar years would see a reduction in Thai–Chinese tensions as the military officers who seized power soon realized that pursuit of mutually beneficial relations with wealthy Chinese businessmen offered more benefit than suppressive policies.

Bruce Reynolds

Forced labourers begin returning home. Upon hearing of the Japanese surrender, forced labourers in North Borneo begin slowly working their way back home to Java. Elsewhere across the vast extent of Japanese-occupied Asia, tens of thousands of people drafted into supporting Japan's war effort take their futures into their own hands and slip away from their masters. Many more must await repatriation after Allied troops arrive; they are stranded too far away from home. The fate of the many 'comfort women' forced into military brothels is also uncertain.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 018688

Javanese labourer liberated by Australian troops in Labuan.

Forced labourers and their fate

When the Australian Army effected amphibious landings on British Borneo in June 1945, the Japanese retreated inland, leaving behind the labourers they had brought from Java. The Australians found these abandoned labourers, starving or dead (see photos). They were among nearly 300,000 labourers the Japanese mobilized from Java and sent to other parts of Southeast Asia, including 120,000 to Sumatra. In the months following Japan's surrender, the Allies disarmed the Japanese and repatriated them as well as Asian labourers. In November 1945 in Singapore, the Netherlands set up the Netherlands Bureau for Documentation and Repatriation of Indonesians, which repatriated about 70,000 men from parts of Southeast Asia, not including Sumatra. In addition, Indonesian, British and Australian authorities, and the Dutch in Sumatra, also repatriated a comparable number of Javanese labourers, while some labourers found their own way home.

The Japanese mobilized labour to build military facilities, including 119 airfields in eastern Indonesia, and obtained labour from wherever they could. A district head in Bali testified that he sent off over one thousand labourers but only one hundred or so returned after the war. According to him, coercion was unnecessary because the occupation created massive unemployment among the local coffee growers; an alternative to labouring for Japanese was starvation.

Battlefronts were often located in areas deficient in food. Sending food to the front lines was harder than sending personnel because food had to be consumed constantly. To compensate poor

logistical support, the Japanese used forced labourers to create agricultural colonies near the frontlines. Despite such attempts, about 200,000 Japanese troops starved to death in New Guinea alone. Death rates among agricultural labourers were high. In British Borneo in 1944, the Japanese forced 242 Javanese men to farm for the Japanese. By November, 118 of them had died, 65 fallen ill, six escaped, and only 53 men were working.

Disruption in marine transport also necessitated labour mobilization. The Japanese built railways in Thailand, Burma, Sumatra, Java, Malaya, Borneo and Sulawesi, largely to compensate for the reduction in regional marine transport (see p. 106). In northern Sulawesi before the war, people exported coconut meat and shipped in food from southern Sulawesi. No road connected the north and the south. Disruption in coastal navigation drove the people in the north to the verge of mass starvation. The Japanese forced local people to build a road to send food overland from the south to the north. The local people remember this forced labour as one of their most painful wartime experiences.

Labour dislocation occurred within each densely populated area as well. Prices of daily essentials rose more rapidly than rural labourers' incomes and made it impossible for them to make a living in their villages. Consequently,

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 127692

Australian troops discovered these malnourished and sickly labourers in June 1945 upon landing in Borneo. They had been abandoned by retreating Japanese forces.

in northern Vietnam, which was under the French administration until 9 March 1945, over two million people walked away from their villages, half of them starving to death in the winter of 1944–45. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, towns and cities swelled as destitute people from the countryside streamed in and formed shantytowns. Migration from urban centres to rural areas also took place. Before the war, Singapore and the Malay peninsula imported two thirds of locally-consumed rice. During the war, food importation dropped and the Japanese forced some urban people to migrate to rural areas to grow their own food.

When labour was locally mobilized, most labourers heard the news of the Japanese surrender soon after 15 August and began to return home even when they were not officially dismissed. Near Phnom Penh, for instance, the Japanese mobilized about three thousand labourers daily to dig anti-tank moats. From 16 August, the workers began to walk away and, by 20 August, none was left on the site.

Returning home did not mean their life returned to normal. The rural population's socio-economic dislocation was more extensive than geographical displacement. The wartime trade disruption required economic readjustments and most able-bodied people throughout the region were forced to labour in ways different from pre-war times. Such changes resulted in a drop in labour productivity and, coupled with hyperinflation, sank the rural poor deeper into poverty. Economic hardships aggravated class tensions and precipitated social revolutions that soon after the Japanese surrender erupted in places like Vietnam, Aceh, northern central Java, the Malay peninsula and the Philippines.

Shigeru Sato

The Japanese military and the 'comfort women'

The term 'comfort women' is an awkward but widely-used euphemism for the many thousands of women recruited during the war to serve in brothels used, and often established and run, by the Japanese military throughout occupied areas of Asia. Sexual violence is a deeply disturbing aspect of war, and is evaded and obscured by historians and governments in many countries as they shape the memories of their own nation's military history. In the case of Japan, the story of the 'comfort women' has in recent years become one of the most contentious issues of wartime history and memory.

Our knowledge of Japan's wartime military brothel system is pieced together from a wide variety of sources. These include: many hundreds of pag-

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 120082

A group including twenty-six Javanese women who were liberated at Kupang, West Timor, from Japanese brothels by arriving Allied troops, 2 October 1945.

es of official documents collated by the Japanese government in preparation for its 1993 statement of apology (the Kōno Statement); other official documents unearthed by historians; reports of the interrogation of Japanese prisoners of war captured by U.S., Dutch and other Allied forces around the time of Japan's surrender; testimony of surviving 'comfort women'; material presented in war crimes trials of Japanese prisoners of war; material presented in civil court cases for compensation brought by surviving women; and eyewitness testimony of third party witnesses such as Allied prisoners of war and civilian residents of areas occupied by Japan.

From this we know that the military brothel system was very large and far flung. It extended from Manchuria in the north to New Guinea in the southeast and the Andaman Islands in the southwest, and covered much of East and Southeast Asia in between. Eyewitness testimony includes repeated statements such as these: 'every division had five or six ["comfort houses"] attached. Korean women as well as Japanese women were to be found in them' (interrogation report of a Japanese soldier who served in Burma before becoming a POW); 'as soon as they occupied a city they [the Japanese military] brought in Korean prostitutes' (British missionary in China 1929–44).

Courtesy of U.S. National Archives

Liberated 'comfort women' in Korea.

An Anglo–Burmese civilian living in Burma during the occupation recalls that 'comfort women' were referred to by locals as 'Mei-Chosen', meaning 'Korean women', and that 'there were lots of them then'. Exact numbers are unknown, but plausible estimates suggest that between 50,000 and 100,000 women from Japan, Korea, China, Indonesia, Malaya, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere were recruited to serve in Japanese military brothels during the war.

Methods of recruitment varied widely, as did the nature of the military brothels themselves. In some cases women were 'sold' by their parents or induced by the offers of brokers, but there is extensive evidence of recruitment by deception and debt bondage, as well as numerous credible accounts (particularly from Southeast Asia) of the seizing of women at gunpoint. Postwar U.S. questioning of one group of Korean 'comfort women' in Burma found that they had been lured by the false representations of brokers, who suggested that they would be engaged in tasks like 'visiting the wounded in hospital' and 'rolling bandages'. Indonesian woman Mardiyeh (b. 1926) echoed the experience of many, recalling how she was approached by a Japanese soldier who offered her a job as a laundry woman and then forced her into sexual services at a nearby barracks. Other Indonesians (like Dominggas, b. 1928) and Filippinas (like the women of the village of Mapanique) were seized by force after other members of their community were killed by Japanese troops. In a few cases, European civilian detainees in occupied territories were taken by force into military brothels.

On Japan's defeat, these women were abandoned, and some died of malnutrition or were killed in fighting. Many were repatriated by Allied troops after the war's end, but some found themselves unable to return home. Since the 1980s, the problem of the 'comfort women' has become one of the largest stumbling blocks to full postwar reconciliation between Japan and its neighbours. The Japanese government's 1993 apology was an important step forward, but since then, and particularly in the past three years, denials of crucial aspects of this history by senior Japanese figures have again inflamed antagonisms, while some politicians and others in China and Korea have also exploited the problem for their own ends. Seventy years on, a new effort to address this history honestly and in its international context is overdue.

Tessa Morris-Suzuki

17 August

Fall of puppet Chinese national government in Nanking. Chen Kung-po, who had taken over as president of the Reorganized National Government of China in Nanjing after the death of Wang Ching-wei, flees to Japan, thus ending the Japanese puppet government in China. However, Japanese troops continue to maintain order in the city. Over time, officials serving the wartime puppet administration will be arrested and charged for collaboration or treason. Chen himself will be repatriated to China on October 3 and later sentenced to death.

Emperor Puyi captured. After abdicating the day before, the Emperor of Manchukuo (and former Emperor of China), Puyi, is captured by Red Army troops while attempting to flee by plane to Japan. He is taken to Chita in Siberia.

End of Japanese-sponsored Philippine regime. President José P. Laurel, head of the Second Philippine Republic since its establishment in 1943 during the Japanese occupation, had been evacuated to Japan with his family when U.S. forces closed in on Baguio in April 1945. With the surrender of Japan, Laurel issues an executive proclamation from his new home in Nara, near Kyoto, declaring the dissolution of his government.

Emperor Puyi with a Soviet officer, 1945

Puyi: a survivor

On the day the Soviet–Mongolian army crossed the Manchurian border, Puyi, the emperor of Manchukuo, was informed that the capital was to be moved from Hsinking (Changchun) to Tunghua in the south for safety, and he and the court would have to move immediately. The Kwantung army was planning a defence line around Tunghua. As with many of his ministers, the emperor was reluctant to leave the capital, yet on 11 August 1945, the royal court and most

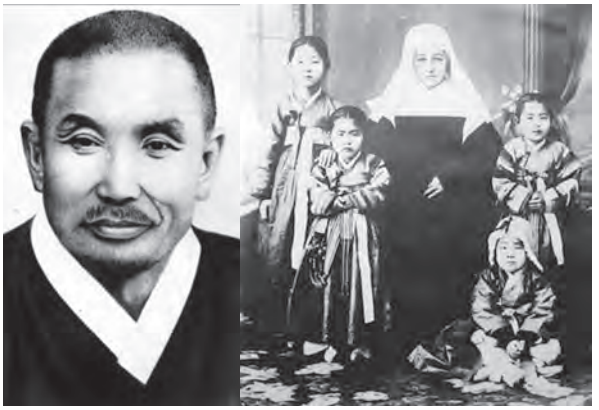
of the ministers began their journey and arrived, as requested, in Dalizigou (Talizukou) two days later. There, they heard about the capitulation of Japan on 15 August and the emperor officially abdicated, declaring the collapse of Manchukuo. Puyi and a few of his close male relatives boarded a small plane provided by the Japanese to take him to Hsinking. He planned to take a bigger plane to Japan on 17 August but was captured by the Soviet Army at Hsinking airport and taken to Siberia.

In many ways, Puyi's life history reflects the political changes of China during the 20th century. He was an unfortunate man fated to become emperor of a failing dynasty at a time of rising revolution, but at the same time he was a fortunate man who survived major political turmoil not only in China but also in Northeast Asia. His survival seems to be related to his inclination to accept and adapt to his environment, albiet reluctantly. He was brought to the Ching court to be enthroned as an emperor when he was three years old in 1908. Barely three years later, the Chinese Republic forced him to abdicate, but he was allowed to retain his title and court in the Forbidden City and promised, among other things, an annual subsidy of $4 million. He was permanently confined in the Forbidden City for 12 more years. He was interested in the outside world, but accepted a reality that forbade him to explore it. In 1924, the Chinese Republic changed its mind and demanded that he give up residence in the Forbidden City and renounce his title. He sought protection from the Japanese legation. In 1932, when he was 25, the Japanese army installed him as the Chief Executive of the new state Manchukuo. Although he was determined to build a Manchu state and become a real ruler, he was young and inexperienced; to be fair, few would have been able to resist the Japanese military and intriguing ministers who ostensibly served him.

After his capture on 17 August, the Soviet army took Puyi first to Chita and then to Khabarovsk. He and his colleagues were well cared for in Soviet resort hotels. During that time, he was summoned to the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo. He proclaimed his innocence, insisting that he had been forced to become ruler of Manchukuo by the Japanese and that the Japanese ruled Manchukuo. He was not charged. It seems that his acceptance of Japanese domination and his passivity saved his life in the end. He was returned to China in 1950 but with dignity, seated with the Soviet officials like a guest in the train. This was in strong contrast to how the Mongolian People's Republic deported De Wang, covering his eyes and tying his hands behind his back like a criminal. In the Chinese prison in Fushun (and Harbin), Puyi underwent re-education until 1959 when he was released to become a 'real citizen' of the People's Republic of China. He adopted the new ideology and new political and social environment without complaint.

Li Narangoa

Korean Christians take leading role in the north. Fearing a power vacuum in northern Korea, the Japanese governor of Pyongyang turns to the Protestant church, the largest organized community in the north. He convinces the prominent nationalist activist and Presbyterian elder, Cho Mansik, to organize a committee to assume control and maintain stability. This committee affiliates with Yŏ Unhyŏng's Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence and helps with the formation of people's committees in the region.



Left: Cho Mansik. Right: A French missionary with Korean converts. Protestant and Catholic missionaries brought their religion to Korea during the 1880s, where they established many schools, orphanages, hospitals, universities and churches throughout the country. During the Japanese occupation, Christians became strongly associated with the independence movement, lending legitimacy to their religion.

General McArthur

Roadmap agreed on Japanese surrender. General Order No. 1, prescribing when, where and to whom Japanese forces may surrender, is approved by President Truman after having been hastily negotiated between the Allies. The formal surrender of Japan to the Americans takes priority, even though elsewhere this will leave a power vacuum until local surrenders can be accepted.

General Order No. 1

General Order No. 1 was issued to the Japanese government on 17 August 1945 by Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Douglas MacArthur. The order instructed the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to direct its military and naval commanders in the field to surrender their forces and weapons to specifically designated representatives of the Allied Powers (the United States, Great Britain, Soviet Union, and Republic of China). General Order No. 1 set in motion military operations that would have profound political implications, because whoever took the surrender of enemy forces in a given area would gain imme-

diate control of that territory by virtue of having the only armed forces on the ground.

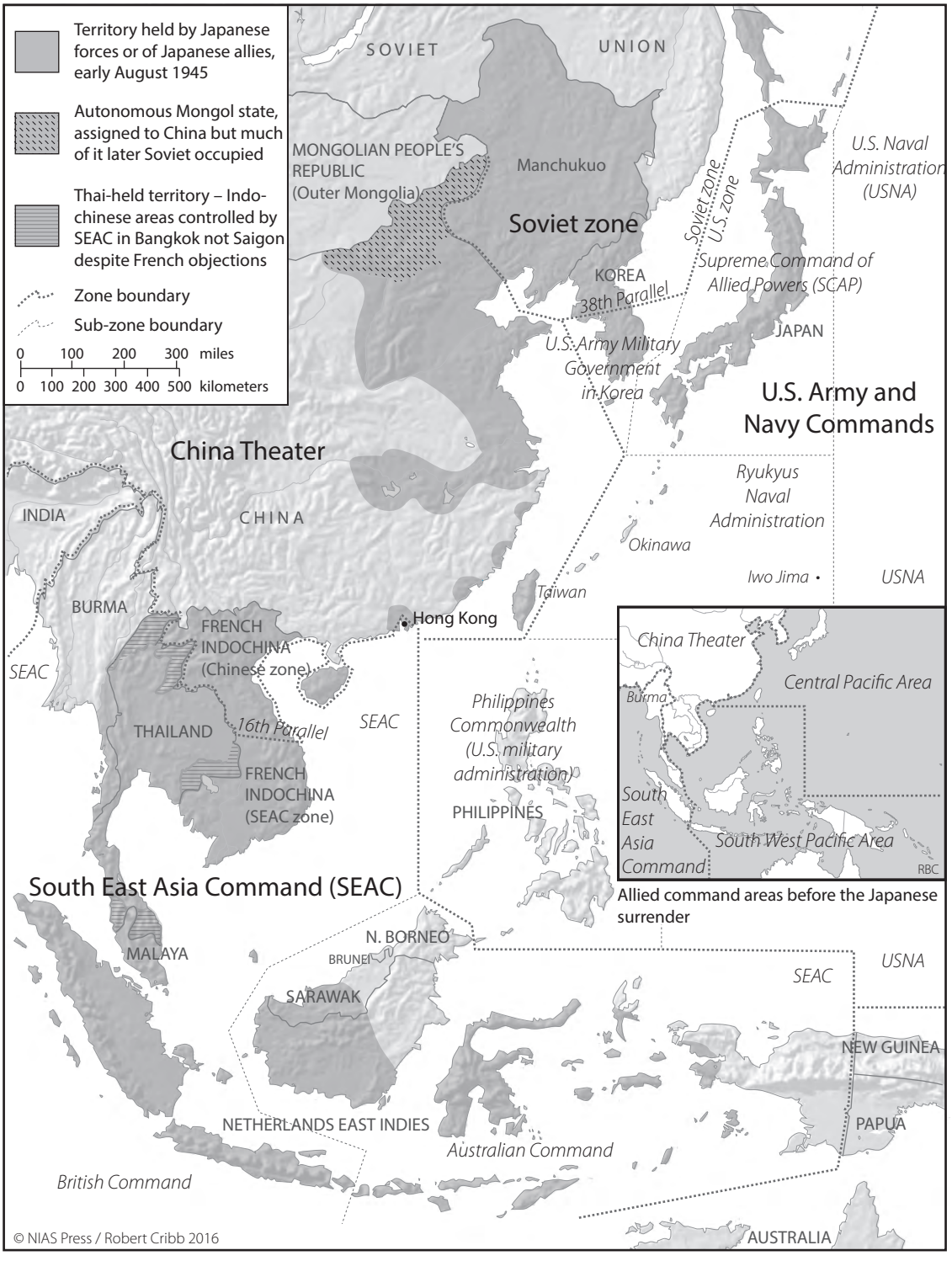
When the Allies met at the Potsdam Conference in July, they had agreed only upon operational boundaries for the purpose of preventing clashes between the different armies and navies. These operational arrangements were premised on the assumption that the war would not end soon. Allied military representatives did not discuss postwar occupation responsibilities because they expected the occupation zones to follow naturally from the agreed military operations. For example, the American occupation of Japan would result from the American invasion of Japan's main islands. British military operations in Southeast Asia would lead to a brief British occupation of most of that region.

In early August the United States exploded atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union declared war against Japan. Suddenly, it looked as though the war would be over in days instead of months, well before most of the military operations were under way. The problem of who would take the Japanese surrender in different parts of the Japanese empire required immediate attention.

On the night of 10–11 August, members of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (assistant secretaries from each department) and the Joint Staff Planners (military staff officers) met in adjoining rooms in the Pentagon to draft the documents that would spell out the steps to be taken by Japan in order to complete the surrender. Key among those documents was General Order No. 1.

By the morning of 11 August, the territorial provisions of the General Order were completed. According to the draft, all Japanese troops in China (excluding Manchuria), Formosa, and Indochina north of the 16th Parallel were to surrender to the representatives of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The Soviets would take the surrender of Japanese forces in Manchuria, Korea north of the 38th, and Karafuto (southern Sakhalin). British forces commanded by Lord Mountbatten were designated to take the surrender in Southeast Asia including Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Borneo, the Netherlands Indies, and French Indochina south of the 16th Parallel. Admiral Chester Nimitz and General Douglas MacArthur would divide the remainder of Japan's empire between their two commands. Nimitz would take the surrender in the bypassed areas of the Central and Western Pacific, as well as unspecified 'other Pacific Islands.' MacArthur would take control of 'the main islands of Japan, minor islands adjacent thereto, Korea south of 38th [degree] north latitude and the Philippine Islands.'

The staff officers who drafted General Order No. 1 were able to complete this complicated task in a short time primarily because they used the operation-



Allied command areas before the Japanese surrender

Japanese military dispositions prior to the Soviet attack and allocated surrender zones according to General Order No. 1.

Derived in part from map at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Second_world_war_asia_1943-1945_map_de.png. Relief map courtesy ©Mountain High Maps.

al boundaries agreed upon at Potsdam as their guide. The one exception was Korea. The State Department wanted American forces to occupy a portion of the Korean peninsula to ensure that the United States would play a role in determining the political future of that former Japanese colony (see p. 193). Otherwise, General Order No. 1 was written as if all of the anticipated Allied operations had proceeded as planned. But such was not the case. Chiang's troops were not advancing into eastern and northern China. Mountbatten's forces were not ashore in Malaya or the Netherlands East Indies. Nor had Chinese or British troops reached Indochina. Nevertheless, Japanese troops in those areas would be ordered to surrender to the designated Allied commanders, whenever they actually appeared. In the meantime, the Japanese were expected to retain control of the areas they occupied.

On a geopolitical level, the General Order favored the interests of great powers at the expense of insurgent or anti-colonial forces in China, Korea, Indochina and Indonesia. Japanese troops in Southeast Asia were ordered to surrender to the representatives of the returning European colonial powers. In China, the emperor's men would surrender to the recognized Nationalist government as opposed to the Chinese Communists. It soon became apparent, however, that it would take weeks for the Nationalist Chinese to move into the key coastal areas held by the Japanese. In the meantime, the Communists declared that they would ignore the General Order and take the surrender of Japanese forces in northern China below the Great Wall (see p. 48). Ultimately, the Americans forestalled these Communist efforts by dispatching amphibious forces to hold parts of northern China, but they also relied on the Japanese to obey the General Order and surrender only to the Nationalists. In this way, the Allies used the former enemy's troops to fend off Communists forces until the Nationalists could take over.

The preliminary draft of the General Order also glossed over potential points of conflict *between* the powers. It did not specify who would take the surrender in the Kurile Islands, which, according to agreements made at Yalta, were to be transferred to Soviet control. The Americans hoped to occupy the southern islands in the chain before the Soviets could get there, but Soviet premier Joseph Stalin promptly called attention to the agreements and the United States reluctantly abandoned its plans. Over the next several weeks, the Soviets occupied all of the Kuriles as well as Habomai and Shikotan, two areas just off the coast of Hokkaido that previously had not been considered part of the Kurile Islands.

The General Order also omitted mention of Hong Kong, a matter of intense interest to the Chinese and British (see p. 158). Finally, in converting the operational boundaries into occupational boundaries, the General Order placed

the northern half of French Indochina in the Chinese zone. The French, who mistrusted Chinese intentions, immediately objected and requested that the entire colony be placed within Mountbatten's zone. In responding to these requests for revision of the General Order, the Americans were placed in the difficult position of having to favour one ally over the other. In the end, the Americans disappointed the Chinese by assigning to the British the responsibility for taking the surrender of Hong Kong and outraged the French by designating China as the responsible party in northern Indochina. French concerns were subsequently borne out when Chinese Nationalist troops occupied Indochina above the 16th Parallel (see p. 202). The Chinese enriched themselves at French expense and more significantly, allowed the Viet Minh, the communist-led Vietnamese resistance movement, to declare independence from France through the creation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

General Order No. 1 was written in haste and revised through a process of ad hoc negotiation between the Allies. In the process of trying to arrange an orderly surrender that comported with great power interests, the United States became more deeply involved in China's civil strife, partitioned the Korean peninsula and unexpectedly aided the revolutionary movement in Indochina. The General Order's impact is still felt today in the division of the Korean Peninsula and the ongoing dispute between Japan and Russia over the latter's occupation of the southern Kuriles and Habomai and Shikotan, what Tokyo calls the Northern Territories.

Marc Gallicchio

Peace preserved in Hanoi. With Japanese permission, the Vietnam General Association of Government Employees convenes a meeting in front of the Hanoi Opera House, attracting at least 20,000 people. Different groups take part and there is some tension when Viet Minh supporters take over the meeting. Afterwards, the crowd marches peacefully through the city centre. The atmosphere is festive, not confrontational, with no attempt to enter government buildings and no threats being directed at Japanese and French nationals encountered along the way.

Viet Minh flags flying outside the Hanoi Opera House at a mass rally during the August Revolution.

French prepare for return to Indochina. With little inkling of the nationalist fervour gripping his country's lost Asian territories, Charles de Gaulle announces two key appointments for the recovery of Indochina: Admiral Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu as high commissioner and General Philippe Leclerc as commander of French armed forces in the Far East. Plans are also afoot to land French agents in the territory. At this stage, however, authority for the reoccupation of Indochina lies with China and Britain, not France. Moreover, fewer than 1,000 French troops are immediately available in Ceylon to be included in the SEAC contingent being sent to Saigon. More troops can soon be sent but there is a serious shortage of transport and equipment available to French forces.

Musings on the French and the Japanese

The French ethnologist Eveline Porée Maspero (1904–1992) lived and worked in Cambodia between 1934 and 1946 . In 1983, when I visited her and her husband Guy Porée in Mormoiron (Vaucluse), she generously allowed me to copy passages from the diary she maintained over the period 1942–1945. The following are my translations from the French of two entries from August 1945.

14 August: In the evening [a French colleague] Grosjean told us that Suzuki, the Japanese painter, has solemnly told him that the armistice had been signed and that at 1 AM on the 15th the Mikado would announce this to his people. So on the 15, at 1 AM on the dot (since we are on Japanese time) we drank a small glass of synthetic curaçao in honor of the end of the war. We confessed to each other, while speculating about the future, that we couldn't help but feel compassionate toward the Japanese for, at this time when the war has finally ended, our thoughts returned to the atrocious hour in June [1940] when the Marshal [Pétain] announced the other Armistice.

17 August: The Japanese were very agitated in the days that followed the armistice. They seem to have regained their calm. They've been telling local people and it's said their own people as well that they have no more to do here because they have given independence to the oppressed [Indochinese] and are now free to depart. They've come to believe that they're not defeated and, like a child breaking a toy that it's been given, they poison the Indochinese with propaganda and rumours which strike us as naïve but which have a disturbing effect on Asiatic spirits. Trouble is everywhere – in Cambodia less than in other places.

David Chandler

Flooding threatens renewed famine in Vietnam. In a disturbing reminder of events leading up to the mass famine earlier in the year, flood waters breach dikes on the Red River upstream from Hanoi. Within days, 150 breaches are reported around the delta, about one third of Tonkin's summer rice crop being inundated as a result. Its inability to deal with the situation dispels any remaining credibility that the royal government may have had. The floods also inhibit vehicle movement by both Japanese and Chinese troops, offering a temporary benefit to local insurgents.

The Great Vietnam Famine

For the people of the Red River Delta, and even parts of north-central Vietnam, already in the throes of famine, the timing of the Japanese *coup de force* on 9 March 1945 was a disaster. It could not have been worse, especially as the military takeover stymied the already weak Vichy French relief effort. Reaching its zenith in March–April 1945, deaths stemming from the Great Famine eclipsed in scale all human tragedies of the colonial period in Vietnam, even if the absolute number of deaths (from 1–2 million) remains disputed.

The threat of famine was omnipresent in parts of Vietnam and well-known throughout the country, especially after droughts and floods. Even setting aside internal demographic pressures, massive Japanese grain exports along with Allied interdiction of rail communication severely limited the ability of the northern Vietnamese population to feed itself. Those on the brink of subsistence – the mass of peasant producers – were already pushed to the wall by floods and typhoons in late 1944. Their impact is well captured by Duy Hoa, who lived at Phat Diem in hard-hit Ninh Binh in the lower delta. Writing on 2 February 1945, he observed that '[t]he rice buds had scarcely formed when they came under prolonged inundation, leading to the complete loss of the harvest … We have not seen a flood of such size for 10 years … no reserve of rice exists.' At the climax in mid-February1945, many among the most indigent and vulnerable began turning up in the streets of provincial towns and even Hanoi. For them, begging, scavenging, theft and even brigan-

Photo: Harrison Forman

This photograph, taken in the outskirts of Hanoi in a year of normal rainfall (1950), shows how quickly a breach could become disasterous.

dry were the only recourses. Viet Minh recruitment arising out of the famine likewise cannot be ignored, especially where they broke into rice stores and offered some kind of parallel distribution system.

The natural disaster was made even worse by a Japanese-imposed rice levy administered by the Vichy administration. Even where a surplus could be diverted to the marketplace, speculators and opportunists diverted rice to an illegal black market, further driving up prices and sinking even those with fixed incomes – the petty salariat, the day workers and others. At the end of the day, a belated Vichy logistics rescue operation failed, leading many Vietnamese to believe that the French had lost the right to govern. While the returning French would, in late October, begin to ship southern rice north via Haiphong port, it was too little and too late for the mass of the population, also burdened by the prior arrival of some 200,000 Nationalist Chinese soldiers under General Lu Han. As with Ho Chi Minh's desperate plea for international food relief (unheeded), the Great Famine etched itself upon the national psyche. The newly established Democratic Republic of Vietnam made agricultural recovery a prior-

[F]amine occurs only among peoples for whom chronic hunger is a way of life.

~ Arlene Golkin, *Famine: A Heritage of Hunger*

Taking care of the dead, Vietnam early 1945.

ity for decades to come, notwithstanding severe errors in land reform and other setbacks.

Setting aside the recriminations and blame for the tragedy, it must be said that, even if northern Vietnam had become increasingly dependent upon imports of southern rice over the previous two decades, France could hardly be blamed for the demographic increase in the north. If the law of unintended consequences has to be spelled out, then it is clear that continued rice requisitions demanded by the Japanese, in a situation of administrative breakdown and even semi-anarchy after the Japanese coup, magnified the impact of the disaster. According to one hapless survivor, Di Ho, an indigent but literate farmer also from Phat Diem, in the early stages of the famine, Japanese soldiers descended upon the marketplace, stripped it of rice and other goods, and departed without paying a sou.

Human failure and agency combined to betray the people of northern and north-central Vietnam. Affirming the thrust of Amartya Kumar Sen's general arguments on famine, food distribution mechanisms broke down, not in a situation of absolute scarcity as in some conflict situations, but in an environment where all signs pointed to the urgent need for administrative action, namely in moving surplus rice north from the Mekong Delta. Undoubtedly, more rational and humane policies directed at northern Vietnam would have seen more land

Grain was kept aside for soldiers and others, but difficult storage conditions led much of it to rot.

under rice cultivation, less rice diverted to industrial alcohol, etc., corn and other crops planted as a backup, fewer forced deliveries, greater availability of food crops in the marketplace, and the release of stockpiled rice – some of it rotting in Japanese-controlled warehouses in Saigon.

This was not the end of the story because on the cusp of the August Revolution, the mid- and lower Red River delta, Hanoi included, was inundated in one of the most devastating floods ever experienced. While many had high hopes and dreams following Japan's surrender, the first priority for most was to ensure enough food to avoid starvation. After its dismal failure while acting as agents of Japan, the French ability to deliver this top priority was severely tarnished. For tactical as well as genuine reasons, the Viet Minh presented itself as the party that would ensure, at a minimum, that its citizens would survive.

Geoffrey C. Gunn

See also Gunn 2014, Sen 1983.

A POW takes charge of the Thailand–Burma 'Death' Railway

Completed in October 1943, the 415-km Thailand–Burma railway linked the rail networks of the two countries. The Japanese built the line as an alternative to the sea passage from Singapore because cargo ships, fuel, lubricants and spare engine parts were all in short supply, and the 2,000-km passage was vulnerable to Allied submarine and air attacks. The engineering of most of the line was of a high standard, although pressure to complete the line quickly resulted in inferior workmanship on the middle section.

Allied bombing forced the Japanese to hide trains on spurs during daylight hours and to run them only at night. The trip from Nong Pladuk, the railway's Thai terminus, to Moulmein took about 50 hours, and the line could handle a maximum of twelve 25-car trains per day. Bridges were built from soft wood rather than steel to facilitate rapid repairs using timber from nearby forests, and the Japanese kept a large workforce in camps along the railway to deal with bomb damage and track washouts. Without constant maintenance, the line would have quickly become unusable.

Allied prisoners of war handled the initial construction, but by 1943 the Japanese had recruited large numbers of Asian labourers to help maintain the line. More than 60,000 POWs worked on the railway and nearly 12,000 perished, many of them along the middle section of the line where teams were under heavy pressure to work quickly. Japanese records indicate that more than 182,000 Asian labourers worked on the railway. A post-war Allied calculation suggests a figure of 270,000, with more than 70,000 deaths – a mortality rate of 27 per cent. Around 75,000 Asian labourers probably remained along the line when the war ended, but many left when the camp guards withdrew, particularly on the Burmese side. Around 35,000 labourers from Malaya and Java stayed on in the camps, and they depended on trains to deliver food, medicine and other supplies.

On 17 August 1945, a group of Allied prisoners of war held near the Thai town of Kanchanaburi spent a few hours exercising on a nearby airfield. Among them was a Dutch officer, K.A. Warmenhoven, who had worked for a railway company in Java before the war. A football match was underway between a Thai team and a group of Javanese railway personnel, some of whom had worked for the same company as Warmenhoven. They told

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, P00406.027

POWs laying track on the Burma-Thailand Railway. c. 1943.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 120516

A group of Tamil women near Kinsaiyok, Thailand, October 1945. These women would have been recruited from Malaya. Women and children worked on the Thailand–Burma railway, as some families followed when their men were conscripted. Life for these people was extremely hard, and they shared the same deprivations as other forced labourers.

him they intended to strike to show solidarity with the Allied cause, and perhaps speed up their return home. Recognizing that any such action would be disastrous for personnel along the line, Warmenhoven discussed the situation with senior Allied officers and then told the Javanese he intended to take charge of the railroad, and would personally guarantee their welfare and eventual repatriation if they kept the trains operating.

Obtaining a pass to leave the POW camp, Warmenhoven went to the main railway office, where the Japanese provided him with a desk and a comprehensive briefing on railway operations. He remained in charge of the railway for more than a year, during which time he oversaw operations and calculated the replacement value of equipment. POW labourers soon moved into transit camps, although some of them remained in Thailand for many months awaiting their passage home. Asian labourers were withdrawn gradually to avoid overwhelming the transit camps; they were gone by early 1946, leaving maintenance of the line in the hands of surrendered Japanese personnel.

All foreign workers had left Burma by mid-1946 and track began to be removed on the Burmese side of the line. Thailand agreed to purchase the Thai side of the railway, with payments apportioned to Burma, Malaya and the Netherlands Indies based on the value of supplies and equipment the Japanese had appropriated. Evacuation of the remaining Japanese personnel took place in October 1947, and the Thai government took charge of the railway in the same month.

Paul H. Kratoska

See also Kratoska 2006 and Warmenhoven 1967.

They left their camp in the dark and they returned in the dark. They had no rest whatsoever. The mosquitoes and midges were a torment and everyone had fever. They lived at the scale of 100 men in a narrow hut 50 feet long, and they slept in three tiers …

~ John Coast, *Railroad of Death*

Malayan independence meeting. At a gathering of Japanese and Malay representatives, young activists commit themselves to a declaration of independence while older representatives urge caution. As for the Japanese, they announce they will have no further involvement in the independence movement.

Communist guerrillas move into smaller Malayan towns. Several MPAJA units begin to take over smaller towns abandoned by the Japanese forces. In towns such as Pusing in Perak, guerrillas from the 13th Squad of the 5th Regiment are welcomed as liberators and heroes as they march in.

'When the Reds go marching in'

With the announcement of the Japanese surrender, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) moved into towns of Perak to maintain order. People of all ethnicities were on the streets, welcoming their liberators. Almost every home of every family hung the red flags of the Malayan Communist Party and the MPAJA. The mood was jubilant and the people were ecstatic at the end of the war.

The sudden Japanese surrender meant the unprepared MPAJA had to act quickly to seize control of the towns and maintain order. Zhang Zuo, as commander of the MPAJA 13th Squad, spent the day giving out detailed instructions to his men before finally leading his guerilla unit out of the jungle to march smartly into the town of Pusing in Perak state.

The streets were thronged with people cheering loudly as the guerrillas marched slowly in step to the tune of the *Military March* played by the squad bugler. Firecrackers were lit and the streets were noisy with its constant popping sound. At the same time, sounds of Chinese drums and percussion instruments being played could be heard, creating a festive cacophony of sounds mixed in with the squad's martial marching melody. Meanwhile, men and women of all ages cheered and clapped while yelling, "Long live the anti-Japanese victory!', 'Long live the Communist Party!', 'Long live the anti-Fascist war victory!'

Once the squad settled down, using a local primary school's building as a temporary base camp, the locals rewarded them with a hefty meal of duck and pork. Zhang Zuo later mused that this celebratory mood was unprecedented even before the war.

Jason Sze Chieh Ng

Photo: Roy Follows

MPAJA bugler

Indonesian independence declared. After a night of bargaining between Sukarno and Hatta, the radical *pemuda*, Admiral Maeda and the Japanese Army, a very short proclamation of independence is drafted at Admiral Maeda's house in Jakarta. Sukarno later reads out this proclamation, signed by himself and Hatta, in the presence of PPKI delegates at his private residence.

Sukarno reads the independence proclamation, Hatta standing to his left.

Proklamasi: a hurried declaration in Jakarta

On 17 August, Sukarno proclaimed Indonesian independence. It was an epochal event, but neither the text nor the ceremony reflected this. The text could hardly have been more terse: 'We, the people of Indonesia, hereby declare Indonesia's independence. Matters concerning the transfer of power and other matters will be executed in an orderly manner and in the shortest possible time. In the name of the Indonesian people, Soekarno/Hatta, Djakarta 17-8-'05'. It was the result of a complex interplay of Indonesian politicians among themselves with the Japanese military, divided too, and the looming influence of the Allies, with the Dutch in their wake. After years of stagnation, the twilight of Japanese empire suddenly seemed to give long-frustrated Indonesian political leaders free rein.

It started on 7 August 1945, when the Japanese Army in Saigon announced the imminent proclamation of Indonesian independence and summoned Sukarno and Hatta to Saigon to work out the details. They were also installed as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Independence of Indonesia (PPKI) that was formed (see p. 46). The 21-member PPKI excluded younger, more radical representatives, generally named *pemuda*, as well as the Islamic wing. On their return on 14 August, Jakarta was rife with rumours about a Japanese capitulation. Sjahrir, popular with the *pemuda*, visited Sukarno and Hatta and pressed them to proclaim independence without PPKI (or for that matter any Japanese) involvement, to avoid Allied accusations of collaboration.

Such a charge would be hard to deny. Sukarno and Hatta had worked with the Japanese to further their independence dream, but in the process they became deeply involved in Japanese propaganda, even to the detriment of their own cause. They supported recruitment of

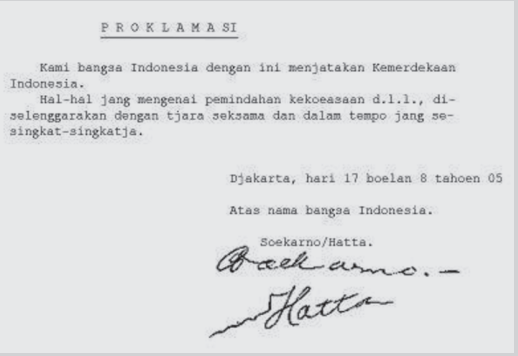
labourers (*rōmusha*) who were worked to death in Indonesia and beyond. As well, the campaign to enlist Indonesian women who ended in Japanese brothels earned them a lot of criticism.

Sjahrir's request was turned down. Sukarno and Hatta still thought they could play their Japanese and PPKI cards. With the news of Japan's surrender this became uncertain; even the fact of surrender was itself uncertain. After some hesitation, Sukarno and Hatta decided they would proclaim independence, legitimized by the PPKI.

When the *pemuda* learned about the surrender on 15 August, it met immediately and strongly opposed a PPKI role in the Proclamation. A *pemuda* emissary sent to Sukarno and Hatta was met with an impolite rebuke. Among the *pemuda*, voices were heard that opted for a Proclamation without Sukarno and Hatta. But another drastic step was taken. Early on 16 August *pemuda* abducted Sukarno and Hatta and brought to Rengasdengklok, 80 kilometres from Jakarta, where the Japanese garrison was disarmed and the red and white Indonesian flag hoisted. In intense discussions Sukarno and Hatta could not be convinced to declare independence without a Japanese taint. In the meantime in Jakarta, the small circle of political insiders (Indonesian as well as Japanese) were desperately looking for Sukarno and Hatta, who were believed to have been arrested by the Kempeitai, the Japanese secret police.

Rear-Admiral Maeda, the highest Navy representative in Java, came to play a pivotal role. Maeda harboured sympathies for the independence movement and his official residence was the meeting-place of *pemuda*, who freely discussed their radical ideas there. Subardjo, soon to be Indonesia's first minister of Foreign Affairs, was in his employ, as was a group of *pemuda*. Two Japanese, Nishijima and Yoshizumi, were close with the Indonesians who frequented Maeda's mansion.

After Subardjo and Nishijima located Sukarno and Hatta, Maeda promised safe conduct and offered his house as a



PROKLAMASI

Kami bangsa Indonesia dengan ini menjatakan Kemerdekaan Indonesia.

Hal-hal jang mengenai pemindahan kekoeasaan d.l.l., diselenggarakan dengan tjara seksama dan dalam tempo jang sesingkat-singkatja.

Djakarta, hari 17 boelan 8 tahoen 05

Atas nama bangsa Indonesia.

Soekarno/Hatta.

Soekarno.—

Hatta

Proclamation

We the people of Indonesia hereby declare the independence of Indonesia. Matters which concern the transfer of power and other things will be executed by careful means and in the shortest possible time.

Djakarta, 17 August 1945

In the name of the people of Indonesia

Soekarno—Hatta

With hours of negotiation bringing no agreement on an elaborate independence proclamation, the final text was brief.

meeting-place where all parties could 'discuss the proclamation in safety'. Fear of being apprehended by the Japanese thus vanished. The Allies had meanwhile issued an order that the Japanese military should maintain the status quo. This blocked any cooperation with a Proclamation and even might involve the arrest of Indonesians planning to proclaim independence. Maeda had to use all his influence to ensure an undisturbed meeting in his house. Sukarno, Hatta, PPKI members and *pemuda* gathered and negotiated for many hours. There was no agreement on an elaborate text; in the end, agreement was possible only on the barest of text. And, who should be the signatories? PPKI and *pemuda* excluded one another and, as a result, only Sukarno and Hatta signed. There is evidence that Nishijima and Yoshizumi, and thus Maeda, were closely involved in the decision-making process, but in the historiography the Japanese role is eclipsed for the sake of the myth of an entirely indigenous Proklamasi. However, one oversight was made: the date on the declaration is 17-08-'05, with the 05 referring to the year 2605 of the Japanese era. The actual ceremony was early in the morning of 17 August. It was hasty and secret, with only a few dozen bystanders, out of fear of a Japanese raid. Those present next hurried to their hiding-places, contemplating how to give substance to the new-born Republik Indonesia.

Harry Poeze

Admiral Maeda Tadashi played a crucial (if careful) role in events leading up to the declaration of Indonesian independence.

Raising the flag of Indonesia immediately after Sukarno read the Indonesian Declaration of Independence at 10 a.m. on 17 August. The flag was sewn by Sukarno's wife Fatmawati the evening before. Sukarno and Hatta are standing to the left.

18 August

Soviets invade the Kuriles. Although their conquest of Karafuto (southern Sakhalin) is incomplete, thus complicating plans for a landing on Hokkaido, Soviet forces attack the Kurile Islands. Within five days they will hold the entire archipelago.

Courtesy of the Dutch National Archives

Soviet soldiers at Harbin railway station.

Mongols in former Manchukuo declare intention to join MPR. A secret group surfaces in Wangin Sum calling itself the Eastern Mongolian Branch of the Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and declares that Inner Mongolia should to be joined with the Mongolian People's Republic. The Mongol administration of former Manchukuo is restored to work towards unification with the MPR.

Japanese resistance ends in Manchuria. With the fall of Hailar, the last organized Japanese resistance to the Soviet invasion ends. Two days later, the Soviets capture Harbin, Mukden, Hsinking and Qiqihar, and begin mopping up the last pockets of resistance.

The Soviet war on Japan

The Soviet Union's declaration war with Japan, which occurred between the dropping of the two atomic bombs, marked a crucial turning point in the war. Despite a Soviet–Japanese neutrality pact signed in April 1941, Stalin promised at Yalta in February 1945 that the Soviet Union would join the war on Japan within three months of victory against Nazi Germany. The Soviet decision to put this promise into effect on 8 August was a crucial factor in hastening Japan's surrender. Some historians suggest that Soviet military engagement was a more decisive factor than the atomic bombings themselves.

On 9 August, the day after the war declaration, Soviet troops launched an attack on Japanese forces occupying Japan's client state of Manchukuo. Japanese resistance quickly crumbled. Around 600,000 Japa-

nese troops were captured and transported to Soviet prison camps, where some remained for years. Conditions were extremely harsh. Approximately 60,000 prisoners are known to have died in captivity. Although most of the survivors returned home in the late 1940s, the last were not repatriated until 1958, and the fates of many more remained unknown until the era of Perestroika, or (in some cases) are still unknown today.

Meanwhile, on 11 August, Soviet troops swept into the Japanese colony of Karafuto (Southern Sakhalin) and on 18 August they launched an attack on the Kurile Islands. Both of these were originally inhabited by indigenous populations – Ainu in the Kuriles and Southern Sakhalin, and Uilta and Nivkh in the central area of Sakhalin – and both were areas where the modern border between Japan and Russia had repeatedly been redrawn. Sakhalin in 1945 had some 300,000 Japanese inhabitants, as well as tens of thousands of Koreans who had been brought there primarily to work in mines or on construction projects. Under an agreement negotiated in the latter part of 1946, most of the Japanese inhabitants of Sakhalin were repatriated, but the repatriation agreement did not extend to the Koreans, who were unable to return home until a belated repatriation scheme was created in the 1990s. Members of the small indigenous Nivkh and Uilta communities had been trained by both sides as spies during the war. Following the Soviet takeover, most of those left behind in former Japanese Karafuto were sent to labour camps as a punishment for their 'collaboration' with the Japanese.

The Soviet takeover of Karafuto and the entire Kurile Archipelago laid the basis for territorial disputes that remain unresolved to the present day. Until the end of the twentieth century, the Japanese government insisted that the legal status of Southern Sakhalin had not been resolved under international law, but the opening of a Japanese consulate in the region in 2001 indicated a quiet de facto recognition of Russian control of this former Japanese colony. The status of the southernmost Kurile Islands of Kunashir (Kunashiri) and Itorup (Etorofu), together with Shikotan and the neighbouring Habomai group, remains a major stumbling block to better Russo–Japanese relations seventy years after the short Soviet–Japanese War began.

Tessa Morris-Suzuki

See also Hasegawa (ed.) 2007, Paichadze and Seaton (eds) 2015, Igarashi 2005.

Japanese troops surrender their weapons, a Red Army soldier keeping record.

'Comfort women' organized for American troops. Concerned to protect the women of Japan from violation by incoming U.S. troops, secret plans are made in Tokyo to establish 'comfort facilities' for the occupation army.

A role model for 'New Japanese Women' – Okichi, aged 19 years

Occupying the Americans

In the wake of the emperor's surrender broadcast, rumours spread like wildfire that 'the enemy, once landed, will violate women one after the other.' The Home Ministry's intelligence analysts immediately recognized the link between these rumours and the behaviour of their own forces abroad. Despite many and varied warnings and individual strategies, it was taken for granted that the foreigners would demand sexual gratification. The question: who would provide it?

The government lost no time in answering this question. On 18 August, the Home Ministry sent a secret wireless message to regional police officials throughout the country instructing them to prepare special and exclusive 'comfort facilities' for the occupation army. Responsibility for staffing such facilities should be assumed by local chiefs of police, who were to mobilize local entrepreneurs and individuals already engaged in providing sexual services.

The issue reached up to the highest levels of government. Vice Premier Prince Konoe Fumimaro asked the national police commissioner to take personal charge of this urgent matter. 'Please defend the young women of Japan,' the prince, a former prime minister, is said to have implored him. Within a matter of days, however, a new approach was taken at the urging of one of the senior officers who had met with General MacArthur and his staff in Manila to arrange the surrender. The government would limit its involvement to a formal endorsement of the project and provision of loans and police support. The entrepreneurs who were encouraged to take the lead expressed their gratitude for this lucrative opportunity to serve the nation by gathering in front of the imperial palace and shouting, 'Long live the emperor!'

Enlisting a small number of women to serve as a buffer protecting the chastity of the 'good' women of Japan was well-established policy in dealing with Western barbarians. Special pleasure quarters had been set up for foreigners immediately after Commodore Perry forced the country to abolish its policy of seclusion, and in modern mythology one young woman who gave her body for the nation at that time was already glorified as a patriotic martyr. Her name was Okichi, and she had been assigned as a consort for the

first American consul, who assumed his duties in 1856.

To the government's surprise, professional prostitutes proved reluctant to become latter-day Okichis. The organizers of the comfort facilities thus sought to recruit ordinary women using a variety of tactics, including this one:

> As part of urgent facilities to deal with the postwar, we are seeking the active cooperation of New Japanese Women to participate in the great task of comforting the occupation force … [we also have openings for] female office clerks aged between 18 and 25. Housing, clothing and food supplied.

Most applicants left when informed what their actual duties would be. Nonetheless, by 27 August, 1,360 Tokyo women had enlisted in what soon would become known in English as the R.A.A., short for Recreation and Amusement Association.

Such R.A.A. centres expanded rapidly in Tokyo – there were soon 33 by one count – and spread almost as quickly to some 20 other cities. The price for a short visit with an R.A.A. consultant was 15 yen, or one dollar – about the same as half a pack of cigarettes on the Japanese market. Two or three times that amount purchased an entire night of personal diplomacy. Although these services did not prevent rape and assault, the incidence of rape remained relatively low given the huge size of the occupation force.

This initiative did not survive the early months of the occupation. In January 1946, occupation authorities ordered the abolition of all 'public' prostitution; privately, they acknowledged that their major motivation was an alarming rise in venereal disease among the troops. By the time the prohibition went into effect a few months later, almost 90 percent of the R.A.A. women tested positive for infection. Around the same time, syphilis was detected in 70 percent of the members of a single unit of the U.S. Eighth Army and gonorrhoea in 50 percent. It was largely to combat such diseases that the first U.S. patents for penicillin were sold to Japanese companies in April of that year.

The women who had been recruited by the R.A.A. were sent off without severance pay, but with uplifting speeches to the effect that they had 'served the country' and been a 'dyke of chastity,' albeit not their own.

John W. Dower

(Abridged from Dower 1999, pp. 124–131.)

U.S. servicemen walking into Yasuura House, an R.A.A. centre in Yokosuka near Tokyo.

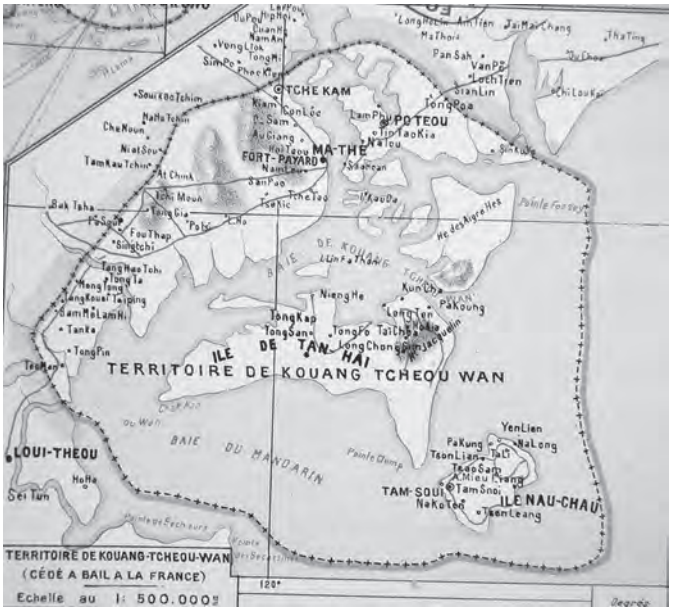
Occupation of Hong Kong remains contested. U.S. President Harry S. Truman states that, as the British forces in Hong Kong could help Chinese and American forces to use the port to reoccupy northern China, he supports the British return. This does not halt Nationalist Chinese ambitions to recover the crown colony. Aiming to pre-empt such a move, Chinese Communist guerrillas attack the Japanese garrison in Hong Kong but are repulsed. Meanwhile, the British fleet heading for Hong Kong reaches the Philippines.

French treaty port returned to Chinese sovereignty. Despite being frustrated in his efforts to recover Hong Kong, Chiang Kai-shek enjoys a victory in his campaign for the return of all lost Chinese territory when French and Chinese representatives in Chungking sign a retrocession agreement for the nearby port of Kouang-Tchéou-Wan.

The fate of European treaty ports – the story of Kouang-Tchéou-Wan

It is somewhat ironic that France never regained postwar control over Kouang-Tchéou-Wan (*Kwang-Chou-Wan*), now known as Guangzhouwan. France leased the territory on the Luichow Peninsula in southern Canton (Guangdong) province through the Sino–French Treaty of 15 November 1899. In 1945, Chinese Nationalist forces accepted the surrender of Japanese troops in Kouang-Tchéou-Wan and, as with numerous other treaty ports, leased territories and concessions where Britain, France, the United States and several other countries had specific rights, Chiang Kai-shek had no intention of facilitating the *status quo ante*.

Japan's intentions were also clear. On 15–16 February 1943, some 500–600 Japanese invaded Kouang-Tchéou-Wan with its strategic harbour and protected bay astride the sea route between Taiwan, Hainan and French Indochina, albeit leaving Vichy France in charge. This action prompted the Chinese Ministry of



French map of Kouang-Tchéou-Wan from 1909.

Foreign Affairs to lodge a protest to the Free French Legation in Chungking over violation of the Sino–French Treaty, notably the clause stipulating that Chinese sovereignty over the territory was not affected by the lease and that China was no longer bound by that Treaty. On this occasion, and contrary to Chungking's interests, Tokyo exhorted Vichy to give up all concessions and extraterritorial rights in China, including interests in Shanghai, Amoy and the Legation Quarter in Peiping, citing pressure from the puppet government in Nanking. Needless to say, the Free French government of Charles de Gaulle did not recognize this capitulation agreement. In any case, in the wake of Pearl Harbor, Japanese occupation forces virtually moved in upon remaining foreign concessions in China. Even Japan's Axis partners were not spared, with Mussolini's Italy pressured over its concession in Tienstin.

On 10 March 1945, simultaneous with Operation Meigo in Indochina and action against the French concession in Shanghai, Japanese troops invaded and occupied the French administrative center of Fort Bayard (Zhanjiang), disarming the French military but allowing most French civilians to remain free. On 18 July 1945, taking actions into their own hands, local pro-Nanking government forces effected what French intelligence described as a 'virtual preemptive coup' in favour of the puppet regime. With two or three exceptions, all French nationals were arrested and interned in the Banque de l'Indochine. Held incommunicado, only their children were allowed outside. Food was rough *riz rouge*. To the surprise of the French, local strongman Tsang Hoc-tam then emerged as Kouang-Tchéou-Wan's puppet administrator. Honoured with a Légion d'Honneur, he had hitherto maintained excellent relations with the Vichy regime. Even following the Japanese coup of 10 March, he was regarded as Kouang-Tchéou-Wan's most prominent Chinese individual. Commanding enormous wealth derived from his ownership of lucrative opium and gaming monopolies, Tsang was also known to have paid off the Nanking puppet government and local Japanese gendarmerie, as well as Chungking agents. He kept law and order in Kouang-Tchéou-Wan with his own private army, also suggesting the emergence of a local strongman in the absence of credible overarching authority.

With the Japanese still in control in Kouang-Tchéou-Wan, representatives of the Provisional French Government and the Chinese Nationalist government, meeting in Chungking on 18 August 1945, signed a retrocession agreement sealing the fate of the territory. Beginning with an exchange of letters on 13 May 1945, it was actually the Chinese side that accepted the French proposals on the basis that retrocession was an exercise of diplomacy and not force. Article I declared the November 1899 Convention to be abrogated and that all rights accorded France by the convention would expire. Article II set forth the

modalities of the return of the territory to Chinese sovereignty (along with all buildings and archives including land documents). Under Article V, China agreed to offer a 30-year renewable lease to France of its official residence to serve as the seat of a future French consulate, if the offer was taken up within a year. (In the event, France did not exercise this right.) Article VI indicated that the convention would take effect immediately. At Chinese insistence, a seventh article was added stipulating that the Treaty be established in both French and Chinese languages with the two versions having equal validity. With the departure of Japanese forces in late September, representatives of the French and Nationalist Chinese governments proceeded with the transfer of authority. The tricolour was lowered for the last time on 20 November 1945.

With the obvious exception of Hong Kong (reoccupied by the British) and the exceptional case of Portuguese Macao, the retrocession of all treaty ports and concessions followed a similar process. Although the British and Americans had entered into wartime agreements with the Chiang Kai-shek government in February 1943 as to the relinquishment of extra-territorial rights in China, and both sides worked together to foster a smooth transition, the changes were unenforceable until the end of the war. By 1946, UK, French and U.S. interests in the Shanghai International Settlement would be abolished. In turn, Britain lost its concessions in Canton (Shameen), Amoy and Tientsin, as did Italy in Tientsin in 1947. The Japanese concessions in Tientsin, Hankow and elsewhere in China also ceased to exist with the capitulation in 1945. Under the 28 February 1946 Sino–French Accords, France formally relinquished extraterritorial rights in Shanghai, Tientsin, Hangkou and Shameen, and pledged that Haiphong would be a free port for Chinese. The conciliatory mood on the part of France in these negotiations can in large part be explained in the context of discussions with the fledgling Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the pressing question of the exit of Chinese Nationalist occupation forces from Indochina.

Geoffrey C. Gunn

See also Matot 2014, Tønnessen 2010.

Courtesy of the German Federal Archives

Some areas of the old treaty ports tried to recreate the look and feel of the metropolitan country – as can be seen with the beach promenade of Wilhelmstraße in the former German colony of Tsingtao. The port was seized by Japan in 1914, returned to China in 1922, but seized again in 1937. In 1945 it would later play an important role in Nationalist Chinese efforts to retake the north of China.

Indian independence leader killed in plane crash. Subhas Chandra Bose, leader of the Indian National Army, dies in a Taiwanese plane crash en route from Malaya to the Japanese home islands. The news staggers the Malayan Indian community from which he has just departed. Wreaths quickly adorn the INA war memorial in Singapore whose foundation stone Bose had laid only weeks earlier. One of the first actions of the British on their return to Singapore is, on 6 September, to demolish the memorial.

Subhas Chandra Bose, signed portrait from 1940.

India's women warriors: The Rani of Jhansi Regiment

When Subhas Chandra Bose took command of the Indian National Army in Singapore in June 1943, he shocked the Indian expatriate community by announcing he wanted women to join the freedom fight. Many, mostly young girls from all religions, castes and social classes raised in the Indian diasporas in Malaya, Burma and Thailand, enrolled in the INA's all-female Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

A contingent of combat-trained Ranis was deployed to Burma in May 1944 but plans to cross into India were never realized, as the British drove the INA and Japanese back into Burma. When British troops were only days away from the Rani camp in Rangoon, Bose ordered the Regiment to retreat to Bangkok despite Rani protests, the last 50 departing on 24 April. Only two died in enemy attacks.

Two sisters aged 18 and 20 stayed on in Bangkok after most of the Ranis had left for their homes in Malaya. Bose invited them to dinner with other INA officers on 16 August. One will never forget that Bose, sensing her anxieties, put his hand on her head like a father and told her not to worry. She asked for an autograph, and Bose wrote in her book: 'Live for others – if you want to live.' The Ranis heard of his death a few days later.

Vera Hildebrand

See also Hildebrand forthcoming.

Photo: Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta

Rani recruits in Singapore, late 1943. The central portrait is of the regimental namesake, Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, who died in battle in 1858 defending her state of Jhansi.

Japanese in Singapore learn of surrender. Military and civilian administrators in Syonan (the Japanese name for occupied Singapore) are summoned to the headquarters of the Japanese 7th Area Army, where General Itagaki Seishirō informs them that Japan has surrendered. The news is then relayed to Japanese civilian organizations.

Syonan had its origins in the lightning Japanese invasion and conquest of Malaya in 1942, with British forces at Singapore capitulating on 15 February.

The last days of Syonan

Midday, Malaya: The municipal employees had to cut their picnic short after a phone call from army headquarters. On the bus ride home, the day-trippers wondered what had happened; the weather had cleared up and it was a beautiful, tropical day. Nawa Tadanori, a civilian like the rest of the staff of the Syonan (pronounced Shōnan) Special Municipality, decided to change the subject. 'I hope that the army knocks Australia out of the war soon,' Tadanori said. 'If they form a Sydney Special Municipality, I'll be the first to volunteer!' Not to be outdone, Kamata Hisako and other employees all at once insisted that they wanted the Sydney assignment instead. Everyone burst out laughing. 'Thinking about that now I'm just amazed at how little we knew', Hisako would say decades later, 'but at the time, aside from those who worked in communications, I think that most of us Japanese were blissfully ignorant like that.'

Only four days after the cancelled picnic, on 18 August 1945, the senior staffers of the municipal government were summoned to army headquarters. There, General Itagaki Seishirō informed them that Japan had surrendered. The Emperor himself had ordered the army to lay down its arms. General Itagaki asked that they continue at their work until the Allies returned and Syonan became Singapore again.

Aono Toshio, head of the Food Control Department, was struck dumb by the announcement. He had spent more than six years travelling thousands of kilometers across East Asia, toiling for an ideal that now meant nothing. But the army had been preparing for a 'decisive battle' in Syonan and, as a senior administrator, he knew that the announcement had almost certainly saved him and his colleagues from a bloodbath. Strung between emotional extremes, Toshio began sobbing. So did everyone

around him. When they recovered their composure, the municipal administrators set three goals for themselves: 1) to maintain public order in the city until Allied forces arrived; 2) to prepare for the handover of the municipal administration; and 3) to construct their own civilian internment camp in Jurong – at the remote Western end of the island – where they would wait for repatriation to Japan.

As they set about these tasks, the municipal bureaucrats said goodbye to their local staff. Ozaki Shunpei vividly remembers one final dinner with the employees of the Forestry and Agriculture Department. Toward the end of the evening, the department's chief clerk, a man named Lim, stood up and assured the Japanese bureaucrats that, if the British asked him to testify about abuses he suffered during the occupation, he would tell the truth: that his Japanese colleagues were all good men and had never harmed him. Shunpei and his colleagues were moved … and relieved. The Japanese civil servants had always drawn a sharp distinction between themselves and the military administration that they were technically subordinate to. A number even saw the protection of locals from the abuses of the army as one of their primary duties. But many locals could not forget how dedicated these men and women had been to constructing Japan's 'New Order' in East Asia. They were active participants in a war that had thrown the economy into disarray and drawn thousands of locals into ill-planned development schemes in the malarial jungles of the region. The civilian bureaucrats may not have participated in the massacre of Chinese men during the early occupation, but they worked toward the same goals as the military police officers who had. To many Singaporeans, the distinction between Japanese civilian and Japanese soldier was all but meaningless.

Three weeks after the surrender, most of the Japanese civilian population had already settled into their internment camp in Jurong. As the Allies landed on 5 September, essential staff waited in City Hall for the formal handover of their duties. They had prepared for extensive briefings with the returning British, but the officers who arrived to take control of the city promptly dismissed them. The next morning, after having their bags inspected by a young British lieutenant, the municipal staff shuffled off to Jurong. It was a 27 kilometer walk under the blistering tropical sun, and children jeered at them from the sides of the road. Some threw rocks.

Clay Eaton

This vignette is based on the accounts of former municipal employees in Shinozaki 1976 and Shingapōru Shiseikai 1987.

The wartime experience of local Singaporeans was different, with ethnic background playing a part here – as seen in the experience of Mabel de Souza (see p. 130).

Indonesian constitution adopted. With its original Japanese-appointed members augmented by some senior officials chosen by Sukarno, the Preparatory Committee for the Independence of Indonesia (PPKI) endorses the constitution drafted in June by its Java-based predecessor. However, the special position for Islam is dropped and virtually absolute powers are granted to the President for a transitional period until legislative bodies can be elected. Sukarno and Hatta are chosen as President and Vice President. The borders of the new republic are to match those of the old Netherlands East Indies (thus excluding British Borneo and Malaya). Next day, the PPKI meets again and approves a new cabinet as well as determining division of the country into provinces.

Pro-Japanese military groups disbanded in Indonesia. Over the next four days, all units of the Peta militia and Heiho volunteers (formed to support the Japanese war effort) are dissolved and their soldiers sent home. With the dissolution of established command structures, the move will hamper the creation of a national army for the new country.

Shaping Indonesia and its government

The Indonesian constitution, as adopted on 18 August, implemented a strong presidential system under the leadership of a new President Sukarno and Vice President Mohammad Hatta. These two were also the 'Great Leader' and 'Vice Great Leader' of the sole political party of the new republic, the Partai Nasional Indonesia, founded on 22 August. Some activists in the government at the time, while recognizing the importance of the Sukarno–Hatta duumvirate, wanted a position as well for a more radical leader, and also someone who was not tainted by collaboration with the Japanese. This became especially pressing as the Allies began to land, and it became clear that international diplomacy would become an important component of achieving full independence. Additionally, Indonesian politicians at the time were more familiar with a parliamentary system of government, as that was the system of the Netherlands.

By mid-October, the Indonesian government had only been running for two months but already it was feeling the strain. This led to a number of major decisions that transformed the structure of government and instituted a parliamentary system that would remain in place until 1959.

Starting on 16 October, government decisions brought quick and broad-ranging changes in the structure of the Indonesian government. First, Vice President Hatta issued an instruction that, in the absence of the elected parliament laid out in the constitution, the Central Indonesian National Committee should fulfil this role. This instruction, known as Vice-Presidential Declaration X, also

included the creation of a special 'Working Committee' of the acting parliament that would run the legislative affairs of the country day-to-day when the full parliament could not be in session. The next day, 17 October, one of the radical youth who had kidnapped Sukarno and Hatta in August again showed his radical bent; he nominated the socialist Sutan Sjahrir to be head of the legislative body, and another socialist, Amir Sjarifuddin, as the *formateur* of a new cabinet. Both of these men had been in the underground resistance against the Japanese, so they were untainted by any accusations of being quislings or lackeys of the Japanese. Sjahrir put together a 15-person Working Committee, which then grew to lead the direction of the government; he became first prime minister a month later.

Even after Sjahrir and his socialist colleagues led Indonesia into a parliamentary system headed by a prime minister in October and November 1945, they needed another institution to support such a development: political parties. The single government party, Partai Nasional Indonesia, was not sufficient to reflect the various interest groups in society (or in politics), and so groups began to form even without government imprimatur. This pushed the hand of Vice President Hatta to once again issue a document, this time a Government announcement on 3 November 1945 on the formation of political parties. The Indonesian Socialist Party had formed on 1 November but a number of other parties, including the Islamic party Masjumi (7 November) and the Labour Party (9 November) formed within a week of Hatta's announcement, and others like the Christian Party (18 November) were founded within the month. Many of the parties that emerged merely reassembled associations from the Japanese period or before the war, and most of the leaders who emerged had also been prominent in pre-war politics.

The institutional change was important, though, as Indonesia rapidly reorganized itself – or perhaps this was still organizing itself for the first time – into a prime ministerial system. Although on paper this was an aberration from the original Indonesian constitution, it was implemented with the full consent of all of the same leaders who wrote the constitution and done within two months of the constitution's promulgation. The prime ministerial system lasted almost fourteen years, as tradition during the Indonesian Revolution and then formally written into the temporary constitutions of 1949 and 1950. Indonesia ceased to have Prime Ministers only in 1959, when Sukarno unilaterally (albeit with the support of the Indonesian military and some secular parties) abrogated the temporary constitution and returned to the original 1945 constitution with its strong presidential system that had hardly ever been implemented. This presidential system remains in place today.

Kevin W. Fogg

19 August

Japanese delegation en route to Manila to finalize surrender details

Americans respond to Thai peace declaration. U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes declares in a statement issued in Washington that the U.S. views Thailand 'not as an enemy but as a country to be liberated from the enemy'. This is in response to Thai Regent Pridi Phanomyong's August 16 statement declaring Thailand's declaration of war as unconstitutional.

Malay leader leaves for Java. The Malay-based movement for immediate independence is derailed when Ibrahim Yaacob and his family leave Malaya for Java. The British return is imminent and Ibraham fears he will be arrested for collaboration with the Japanese.

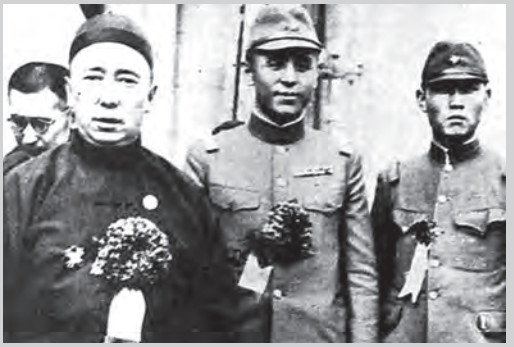
Arrangements for Japanese surrender organized. A Japanese delegation arrives in Manila for a meeting with General Douglas MacArthur and U.S. officials to finalize surrender details. While travelling to and from the airport, the Japanese have to be protected from angry Filipinos threatening to attack them. At the same time, the Philippine Army begins demobilizing. Its units are no longer needed to invade Japan.

Fall of Prince De. Following a Soviet–MPR attack on Kalgan the previous day, the Inner Mongolian independence leader Prince Demchugdongrob and his followers flee the city for Peiping. This signifies the end of his 'Mongolian Autonomous State'.

Prince De

De Wang's dream for a Mongolian state

Mongolian participation in World War II brought the dream of a unified Mongolia not only to Choibalsan in the North (see p. 51) but also fuelled the hopes of Inner Mongols in the south. Prince Demchugdongrob, known as De Wang (or simply Prince De), who had led the Inner Mongolian autonomous movement since the 1930s, saw Mongolian participation in the war and the end of the war as a renewed chance for a unified Mongolian state. His vision was shared by other Inner Mongolian leaders from former Manchukuo.



Having worked with the Japanese and other Mongol separatists like Li Shou-hsin (centre) to carve out an autonomous Mongol state, Prince De had difficulties coming to an accomodation with the Nationalist government.

When the Soviet–Mongolian joint motor divisions entered Inner Mongolia on 9 August 1945, the Mongolian Government led by De Wang had long meetings to decide how they should respond to the new situation. The Mongols were divided. Some suggested they should join the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) by communicating with the Soviet–Mongolian Army in Inner Mongolia; others insisted that De Wang should go to Peiping and make contact with Chiang Kai-shek. In the end they agreed that Inner Mongolian troops should not resist the incoming Soviet–Mongolian army while De Wang ascertained the attitude of the Mongolian leaders in the north towards a unified Mongolia. On 16 August, he sent a delegation to the Soviet–Mongolian army to sound out their attitude towards Inner Mongolia. If the MPR could unify Inner Mongolia with Outer Mongolia, he wrote, the Inner Mongolian government in Kalgan (Zhangjiakou) and Mongols would follow and De Wang would return home to live as a Mongol in Mongolia.

The overture failed. First, the delegation was delayed by Soviet troops because they lacked appropriate identification. Then, the Mongolian officers they eventually met did not respond clearly but instead directed them to their superiors in Ulaanbaatar. Before the delegation returned to Kalgan, Soviet airplanes dropped leaflets denouncing De Wang and his officials as collaborators with the Japanese. On 19 August, De Wang and his inner circle departed for Peiping, believing Stalin would not allow Inner Mongolia to join with the Mongolians in the north. At the same time, the Chinese communists were approaching Kalgan from the south.

In Peiping, De Wang tried to communicate with the Chinese Nationalists in Chungking on the one hand and get American support for his cause on the other. Encouraged by Chiang Kai-shek's recognition of the MPR's independence subject to the outcome of a national referendum (see p. 70) and his mention of Inner Mongolian autonomy on 24 October, De Wang and some of his followers went to Chungking to meet Chiang and ask for high-level autonomy for Inner Mongolia. Chiang, however, responded that the Mongolian problem could not be solved without first solving the Communist problem. Chiang was a diplomat. He did not want to reject De Wang outright, because he was concerned that it might push De Wang towards Mao. He was very much interested in the Mongolian military force and, later in the year, he ordered De Wang's military commander, Li Shouxin, to go to the Northeast and gather his old followers and recruit new soldiers to be ready to fight against the communists. At the same time, he let De Wang know that he might go forward with the idea of the high-level autonomy of Inner Mongolia in preparation for taking back Outer Mongolia in the future.

De Wang realized that the Nationalists would not be reliable in the long term. He thus made every effort to make the Mongolian cause known to the West, especially in America, by talking to American journalists and diplomats including Owen Lattimore. But none of his contacts could help him further.

De Wang did not want to join the communists, but ironically fate forced him to do so. In August 1949, he and his followers set up an Inner Mongolian Autonomous government in Dingyuanying, Alashan, the western part of the Inner Mongolian region not yet officially taken by the Chinese communists. But the new government immediately faced financial difficulty feeding its two army divisions. By late September the Alashan region had come under communist control and De Wang with his entourage moved to the MPR border. From there he accepted Choibalsan's invitation to enter the MPR on 29 December 1949.

Choibalsan shared De Wang's dream of building a unified Mongolia, and the newly exiled prince hoped at the least that Choibalsan would offer some assistance or refugee status for his followers. He was mistaken. Choibalsan never met with him personally and, after being treated as guests, he and his entourage were arrested about two months later. On 18 September 1950, they were sent back to Peking as criminals. His family, who had been invited to Mongolia and treated as honoured guests since 1945, was sent to the Mongolian countryside without any means and his eldest son was executed. De Wang was kept in a Chinese prison until 1963 and his dream of a Mongolian state including Inner Mongolia had vanished.

Li Narangoa

Viet Minh seize control of Hanoi. Early in the day, tens of thousands of villagers march towards the city to the sound of drums, cymbals and horns. A Viet Minh armed unit moves into the Opera House square to disarm or disperse the few police in the vicinity. The Japanese take no counter-measures. By 11:00 the square and adjacent streets are filled with some 200,000 people. Following a minute of silence for those who have fallen in the independence struggle, brief speeches and mass repetition of patriotic slogans, members of the Hanoi Revolutionary Military Committee give instructions over the microphone for the armed, but hopefully bloodless, seizure of a number of pre-selected installations. Two hundred royal civil guardsmen behind locked gates at the Viceroy's Palace offer no resistance when youths scale the fence; they dump their rifles and walk away. Tran Tu Binh, the most senior Indochinese Communist Party member present in Hanoi, uses the Viceroy's switchboard to tell mandarins in the provinces that the Viet Minh has taken over and they must surrender. At the Civil Guard barracks some blocks away, Japanese tanks and troops arrive, negotiations ensue and the Japanese withdraw. Revolutionary change is symbolized that evening by people removing the blackout screens on street lamps, giving a bright glow to the city for the first time in years.

Youths scale the fence as a huge crowd gathers in front of the Viceroy's Palace in Hanoi, 19 August 1945.

20 August

Appeal for recognition of Vietnamese independence. Emperor Bao Dai sends messages to the Allies opposing the return of French rule in Indochina. He also makes a special appeal to De Gaulle himself: 'You would understand better if you could see what is happening here, if you could feel this desire for independence which is in everyone's heart … . Even if you come to re-establish a French administration here, it will no longer be obeyed; each village will be a nest of resistance, each former collaborator an enemy, and your officials and colonists will themselves ask to leave this atmosphere which they will be unable to breathe.'

Viet Minh and Japanese in armed clash. In Thai Nguyen to the north of Hanoi, discussions for a peaceful transfer of authority from Japanese to Viet Minh have been underway for a day. The mood sours abruptly when Vo Nguyen Giap arrives with a Liberation Army unit and demands that the Japanese and a local Civil Guard detachment surrender forthwith. The guardsmen quickly comply but the Japanese refuse. Subsequent Viet Minh attacks are ineffectual. The situation is only defused after news arrives on the 22nd of the dramatic events in Hanoi. Giap then swiftly departs for the city with the bulk of his force.

Vo Nguyen Giap reviews Vietnam Liberation Army troops in Hanoi, 26 August 1945.

Viet Minh tightens its grip in the north. With Hanoi and its administrative structure in its hands, the Viet Minh begins using the existing machinery of government to inform, exhort and increasingly control the populace. At the same time that all political parties are invited to join with the new government in preparing to resist any return of the French, upriver from Hanoi in nearby Son Tay, Viet Minh forces are hunting down and killing 'pro-Japanese' Dai Viet groups. On the 25th, all armed groups are ordered to disband and enrol in the Vietnam Liberation Army. Three days later, citizens are told that henceforth all outdoor meetings, demonstrations or armed training exercises now require government authorization. More restrictions follow in mid-September when two nationalist groups and a youth movement are banned for being 'pro-Japanese organizations'.

Chinese troops begin moving into Indochina. In preparation for the Chinese occupation of Indochina north of the 16th Parallel, advance units of Chinese troops begin crossing into Vietnam. In the upper Red River region they encounter severe flooding and some Viet Minh resistance.

Nationalists in Laos prepare to resist French return. Although some Chinese forces are already in northern Laos, it will be several weeks before China's occupation army actually enters Indochina. The Japanese are supposed to maintain order in Laos until they can formally surrender to incoming Allied forces. The reality is a fragmentation of authority. Meanwhile, Free French forces previously in exile in southern China and northern Burma are already active in the north-west. Some Japanese units hand over arms and other equipment to militia groups dominated by ethnic Vietnamese living in urban centres along the Mekong. Determined to prevent a French return, Lao Issara and Lao-pen-Lao nationalist groups also move to fill the power vacuum. They take control of Savannakhet and Thakhek with the assistance of Viet Kieu Salvation Association forces from both sides of the Mekong. Popular anti-French protests are aired in other areas while British and American personnel in northeastern Thailand are lobbied in support of the Lao nationalist cause.

Fears of a French return were not unfounded.

British give conditional response to Thai peace declaration. Speaking in Parliament in response to Thai Regent Pridi Phanomyong's disavowal four days earlier of his country's war declaration, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin declares that Britain, which has considered itself at war with Thailand, would base its treatment of the country on Thai willingness to make restitution for Allied losses and contribute to the economic rehabilitation of the region.

Japanese surrender publicly announced in Malaya. Japanese propaganda papers, including *Syonan Shimbun*, announce publically that Japan has surrendered, printing the imperial rescript on surrender in its entirety. Representatives from the military and the newly formed civilian 'Japanese Association' select a site where Japanese civilians in Syonan can be interned while awaiting repatriation.

Crowded street in Chinatown, Singapore, October 1945.

Courtesy of Aust. War Memorial, 117923

Mabel's life goes on

Mabel de Souza could not remember exactly when the war ended. As a waitress at Nanmei-Soo, a Chinese-owned restaurant on Cairnhill Road, she noticed that Japanese civilians began to outnumber Japanese servicemen. It had been three-and-a-half years since the fall of Singapore, but her customers began to pay for their meals in the prewar British currency. She heard the waitresses whispering to each other that the Japanese had surrendered. She saw the restaurant converted back into a dance hall, as it had been before the invasion. And then, one day, she found herself waiting on Allied servicemen.

Mabel missed the announcement of the Japanese surrender on 20 August for the same reasons that she had done reasonably well for herself during the occupation. Her world was confined to the two-kilometer walk between Nanmei-Soo and the apartment she shared with her mother on Bencoolen Street. Mabel was paid entirely in tips by the end of the war, which insulated her income from the runaway inflation of the late occupation. She brought home leftovers and never had to register with the local Auxiliary Police Squad for a rationing card. She stayed home to prepare food for her mother in the morn-

ing, worked late into the evening, and even avoided going to Mass.

Mabel was Eurasian: a member of the complexly divided mixed-race community of pre-war Malaya. Eurasians enjoyed a privileged position compared to Chinese, Malays and Indians in the racial hierarchy that prevailed under the British. As a woman with only an elementary education, though, Mabel was unable to take advantage of the access that other Eurasians had to jobs in the prewar colonial administration or Western firms. She was better off than Malay or Indian women might have been in her position: both the Japanese department store she worked at before the war and Nanmei-Soo exclusively hired Eurasian or Chinese women. But she nonetheless had to work constantly to afford rent and support her ailing mother.

During the occupation, Mabel kept working and kept her head down. She did not register at the local police station when she and her mother moved to Bencoolen Street, and she never attracted the attention of the dreaded military police. In her marginalized position, the municipal government never approached her to take a leading role in the semi-official Eurasian Welfare Association. She avoided relocating to the Eurasian agricultural settlement at Bahau, where as much as a quarter of the settlers died of malaria and malnutrition. This is not to say that Mabel was 'safe' during the occupation: an older Japanese man tried to pull her into a dark alley near the restaurant one night (she escaped when he stumbled and fell), and two other times she was followed by Japanese servicemen on her way home. Rather than safety, her marginalized position offered her *anonymity*, which allowed her to avoid the invasive attention of the Japanese occupation state.

It is unsurprising, then, that Mabel did not feel that her life changed much after the Japanese surrender. When pressed during an interview at the National Archives in Singapore, she admitted that conditions were better in the city after the war, but 'I was staying in Bencoolen Street, there were quite a lot of poor people, most of them Eurasians.' Mabel left her job at Nanmei-Soo – British soldiers did not tip very well – and eventually found employment at a local bookstore, but her time was still consumed by work and caring for her mother. Only after she was able to find her mother a bed in the tuberculosis ward of a local hospital, with the help of a new fiancé, did her life noticeably improve. Mabel was relieved when she heard that the war was over. But for her and many others, life would grind on much as it had before.

Clay Eaton

This vignette is largely based on an oral history interview recorded by the National Archives of Singapore. Mabel de Souza, interviewed by Low Lay Leng, 26 January and 9 February 1984, interview 393, Oral History Centre, National Archives of Singapore, Singapore. Details on conditions in Bahau are from an interview with Herman Marie de Souza, by Tan Beng Luan, 17 August 1985, interview 592, Oral History Centre, National Archives of Singapore, Singapore.

21 August

Ethnic violence in Johor. New Malay–Chinese violence breaks out near Batu Pahat, Johor. Such events have been seen since May but, with the collapse of the Japanese order, conflicts mainly along communal lines are becoming increasingly common throughout Malaya.

Growing support for new Indonesian republic. With news spreading of the declaration of independence, over the next few weeks localities in many regions declare their allegiance to the Republic and form local National Committees.

News of Indonesian independence spreads

Although Sukarno and Hatta had proclaimed Indonesian independence in Jakarta on 17 August, they had no effective means to spread this news to the people. In fact, because of the broken communication infrastructure, some of the territory covered by the proclamation and some of the people intended as citizens in the new state did not hear until months later.

Even around the capital, Jakarta, the news took a day to reach some people. In an Islamic school just outside of the city limits, Kyai Haji Noer Ali presided over several dozen male students. One of his students attended the proclamation in person on 17 August, and he immediately came back to report the news to his teacher. The next day, Noer Alie called together all of his students to share the news and explain it to them. According to another student who was present, the explanation included the idea that Indonesians were now free from all foreign peoples – not only their Dutch colonial overlords but also the Japanese military government and local Chinese landlords.

In a few cities outside of Java, the news also began to spread quickly, often through the intermediary of the Jap-

Calling for 'One Nation, One Objective, Maintain Independence' at a mass pro-independence rally in Jakarta on 19 September (see p. 217).

anese occupying forces. In the town of Palopo, at the northern tip of the Gulf of Bone in South Sulawesi, the Japanese let slip the news of the independence proclamation on 18 August and rumours spread through the local population like wildfire. On that evening, to try and focus the energies of the people, a local journalist called a meeting in the old movie theatre, where he confirmed (on Japanese authority) the news of independence and led the assembly in calling out the new nationalist greeting, '*Merdeka!*' or 'Independence!'

Other Japanese commanders were less willing to spread the news about the Japanese surrender and the Indonesian proclamation of independence (news that was generally spread together). In South Kalimantan, although the Japanese commander held a meeting to share the news three days after the proclamation in Jakarta, word did not leak to the general population until the last week of August when a news report from Jakarta was reprinted locally and circulated at a night market in the town of Kandangan. From there, it spread by word of mouth to villages, where it was received sceptically by people already awash in a sea of rumours.

Perhaps the last Indonesians to hear of independence were those trapped outside of the country during the war. The several dozen Muslim students from the Netherlands East Indies who spent the war impoverished in Cairo, for example, only heard about Indonesian independence in late September due to an Allied blockade on the circulation of this news. According to the memoir of one of these students, they were so enthusiastic to do their part for the country's independence struggle that, as a group, they wrote and published a booklet about Indonesian independence. As it happened, though, their information was so incomplete that they had to fabricate entire sections – including the circumstances of the proclamation itself!

Although the news spread slowly through a wide range of channels, it was uniformly received with excitement by Indonesians. This announcement marked a stark departure with the country's history up to that point and foreshadowed the great challenges to come.

Kevin W. Fogg

Merdeka

SOEARA RAKJAT REPOEBLIK INDONESIA

17 AGOESTOES 1945

PERSATOEAN SJARAT PERTAMA MENGHADAPI PERDJOEANGAN IN

KATA PERDANA MENTERI SJAHRIR

"Sjarat pertama oentoek menghadapi plaan pe djoeangan dewasa ini ialah persatoean jang maha kua diantara segenap lapisan ra'jat kedalam dan keloear kata Perdana Menteri Sjah rir dalam pembitjaraan'd ngan wartawan "Antara"

IRINGAN PEMERINTA AGOENG DI BANJOEWANGI

The proclamation of independence soon became not only news of the day but also a common experience to be commemorated in subsequent years.

22 August

Soviets abandon Hokkaido invasion plans. Four days after receiving and mulling over a blunt rejection by President Truman of his suggestion that Soviet forces occupy northern Hokkaido and accept the surrender of Japanese troops there, Stalin signals his acquiescence and scraps his plans.

Thailand appeals to the UN. The Office of the Prime Minister issues a communique stating that the Thai government is willing to submit the question of the Thai–Indochina boundary to the United Nations for resolution, and that it will abide by the UN's decision.

French agents in Vietnam. Two French 'commissioners of the Republic', one for Tonkin, the other for Cochinchina, are parachuted into Vietnam. Pierre Messmer (a future French prime minister) is dropped north of Hanoi. Soon captured by Viet Minh but rescued by Chinese troops, it will be late October before he reaches Hanoi. Jean Cédile lands 85 km northwest of Saigon. He and his three teammates are surrounded by local farmers who give way only when a Japanese platoon arrives on the scene. Stripped naked, force marched, interrogated and threatened with decapitation, Cédile and team present quite a spectacle as they are eventually driven by truck through the streets of Saigon. The arrival in Hanoi on the same day of Jean Sainteny, Messmer's future replacement as Tonkin commissioner, is quite different. He hitches a ride from Chungking on a U.S. flight carrying an OSS mission sent to locate and free Allied POWs. Heading the mission is Archimedes Patti who in following weeks will tussle with Sainteny and, despite his official neutrality, attempt to influence American policy in support of the Vietnamese against their colonial masters.

Archimedes Patti with Vo Nguyen Giap, August 1945

Jean Sainteny

Japanese begin Malayan pull-back. As Japanese forces in Malaya officially begin withdrawing to larger towns, they leave a power vacuum in the countryside. This is one reason for recent communal violence. Some units in outlying areas are reported to have withdrawn as early as 16 August.

Communist guerrillas take control of larger towns in Malaya. The Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army central headquarters orders its soldiers to occupy small and large towns across the country. Guerrillas emerge from the jungle, seizing Japanese weapons, recruiting new fighters and punishing collaborators. Often these collaborators are summarily executed. Some Malays begin to feel that the Chinese-dominated MPAJA is targeting their community.

The Malayan Communist Party's surprising strategy

Following Japan's announcement of unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers, several crucial weeks elapsed before British forces landed in Malaya. The interregnum saw a dramatic collapse of the Japanese order and the eruption of local political and social forces in a potentially deadly struggle for power, with conflicts breaking out mainly along communal lines. Bloody racial clashes during this period between Malays and Chinese had serious repercussions on Malaya's postwar society and politics. The anarchic conditions gave the guerrilla force of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) – the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) – a real opportunity to attempt to seize power but, to the surprise of many, it did nothing to oppose the return of the British, unlike its Vietnamese counterpart under Ho Chi Minh. The MPAJA did seize government offices in isolated locations but it made no move to take over key administrative centres such as Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Japanese forces in Malaya were intact when Japan surrendered and were charged with maintaining order pending the arrival of the British. They had fought the MCP throughout the occupation and harboured an intense dislike of communism. Moreover, the MCP was only one of a number of resistance organizations. It would have had to compete for power with the Malay nationalist Kesatuan Melayu Muda, Chinese residents associated with the Kuomintang and Chinese secret societies.

Apart from the Japanese army, MCP leaders had to consider the prospect of opposition from British military forces, which had supplied them with funds, arms and supplies. MPAJA units were also under the nominal control of Britain's Force 136, part of the Special Operations Executive. No doubt some of these

Lai Tek

restraints could have been shrugged off whenever expedient, but the MCP never lost sight of the fact that the British would return and exact retribution if those promises were not honoured. Finally, there were rumours that KMT military forces might accompany British troops when they returned to Malaya. Militarily, the MPAJA was ill-prepared for seizing power or defending itself thereafter. Communication between MPAJA headquarters and its various units relied on jungle couriers and was painfully slow. Moreover, it would have been difficult to conceal plans for such an action from British officers in their camps. Under the circumstances, there is small wonder that MCP leaders failed to take decisive action.

Political considerations also played a part. The MCP's Secretary General, Lai Tek (a man later shown to have variously worked for the British Special Branch, the Comintern and the Japanese) opted to have the party cooperate with the British and work within a constitutional framework if the British granted self-government to Malaya. In doing so, he invoked the Comintern's United Front policy, basically a wartime expedient to support the moderate post-war line of constitutional struggle.

The MCP later claimed that Lai Tek took the 'rightwing opportunist line' of 'peaceful struggle' because he was a 'lackey of British imperialism', but other observers have suggested that he simply recognized the party's weakness and sought to protect it during an uncertain period of transition. It is doubtful that the truth of this will ever be known, but a mood of disillusionment set in among MPAJA guerrillas over the MCP's failure to act.

It seems likely that, had the MCP's leadership actually gone ahead with a coup, the rank-and-file would have obeyed the orders to stage an uprising. When the MCP finally did call for insurrection in 1948, the bulk of the rank-and-file obeyed the call to arms, even though they were ill-prepared and uncertain about the outcome of their actions.

Cheah Boon Kheng

Moves to consolidate new Indonesian republic. On the same day that the Japanese surrender is publicly announced in Indonesia, the Preparatory Committee for the Independence of Indonesia (PPKI) meets again and sets up the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP) as a proto-legislature to advise the government. The beginnings of a national army are made as well with formation of a People's Security Agency (BKR), which recruits among disbanded troops from Peta and similar units. The Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) is also established as a state party, with Sukarno as 'Great Leader', Hatta as 'Deputy Great Leader' and Sartono as 'Head' (see p. 122). At the end of the month, however, the party is dissolved after being considered 'unnecessary'. (A new PNI is launched in January 1946.)

The military in the early Indonesian republic

To have a chance to survive, the newly proclaimed Indonesian Republic needed public support and, in the face of many threats, the backing of an armed force. The Japanese had militarized Indonesian society and included Indonesian personnel in its Heiho and Peta forces, but these corps were disbanded by the Japanese on 17 August with the consent of the PPKI, which did not want to give the Allies a motive to brand the Republic as a Japanese creation. Instead, the PPKI decided on 20 August to found Badan Keamanan Rakjat (BKR, People's Security Organization), a euphemistic name for what clearly was meant to be an army. Sukarno asked former Heiho and Peta members and units to join the BKR. This set in motion a development that led to the springing up of myriad BKR units, at local and regional levels, without national control. The bond between leadership and rank and file was often personal, armaments differed greatly and political orientation varied. Turning this assortment into a homogeneous national army, subordinate to the government, proved to be a challenge that the Republic's leadership never fully overcame.

On 5 October, the BKR was renamed as Tentara (Army) Keamanan Rakjat (TKR). Its leadership was entrusted to Oerip Sumohardjo, a former officer in the colonial army (KNIL). In a dramatic declaration, he and other KNIL officers renounced their oath of allegiance to the Dutch Queen and sided with the Republic. They were met with suspicion by the Peta units reconstituted as BKR units. And there were still other units, usually named *badan perdjuangan* (struggle organizations), often lacking in discipline and hierarchy, and inspired (as

Oerip Sumohardjo

Anderson put it) by 'personal example, revolutionary visions, and the egalitarian solidarity of *pemuda* comradeship'. So the TKR structure mainly remained on paper, despite the efforts of the former KNIL officers. The TKR units followed their own agendas and acted according to their own priorities.

A crucial meeting of the highest officers took place on 12 November (see p. 295). The BKR here chose its own supreme commander. Oerip lost by a narrow margin to Jendral Sudirman, a former Peta officer who had been successful in military actions in Central Java and whose personality made him a popular commander. Upon his election, Sudirman acted diplomatically. He asked Oerip to remain as chief of staff and left technical military matters to him. To quote Anderson: 'he devoted himself primarily to the political problems of uniting the army and giving it a coherent vision of its role in the revolution'. And Sudirman held his own views on these matters. The army had its own special position in the Revolution on an even footing with the government. In this philosophy it was even logical that the army should choose its own minister of defence, and so indeed it did, on 12 November. This was of course unacceptable to the government, which nominated the socialist Amir Sjarifuddin. It was the beginning of tug of war between army, with its stress on unity for the defence of independence, and the government, which considered the army its instrument and subordinate to its political goals. The conflict was never settled and the army's *dwifungsi* (dual function) continues to influence Indonesia today.

Harry Poeze

See also Anderson 2005.

Courtesy of the Dutch National Archives, Fotocollectie Anefo

General Sudirman, November 1946.

23 August

Soviets announce victory in Manchurian campaign. Upon securing the prized ports of Dairen and Port Arthur, the Soviets announce the end of Japanese resistance. In a two-week campaign, Japan has suffered its worst military defeat, with over 80,000 troops killed and more than 600,000 taken prisoner. Most of these will be sent to Siberia. The Soviets will delay their withdrawal from Manchuria until May 1946. In this period, they will strip Manchuria of much of its industrial base, shipping this back to the Soviet Union. The two ports will remain under joint Soviet and Chinese Communist control until 1955.

Courtesy of Novosti Archive, Russian International News Agency

A landing party from the Soviet Pacific Fleet raises the Soviet naval ensign over Port Arthur.

Kazuki Yasuo: The witness of art

Kazuki Yasuo (1911–74) was a corporal in the Kwantung Army, Japan's Manchurian garrison, which surrendered to Soviet forces at the end of World War II and was subsequently held in forced labour camps across the USSR.

In the immediate postwar years, camp conditions were at their worst. Kazuki was held for eighteen months in a series of logging and mining camps not far from Lake Baikal – 'Siberia's belly button', as he called it. An academy-trained painter, he left two major records of his captivity: the 57-canvas Siberia Series and his memoir, *The Siberia within Me* (Watashi no Shiberiya, 1970). These provide indelible portrayals of camp life: the daily group visits the prisoners made to the camp latrine; the exhausting, dizzying labor of timber felling, a camp funeral, and many other scenes. Kazuki seems to have been lacerated by survivor guilt, compounded by the fact that his skills as a painter spared him the more dangerous work prisoners had to perform.

But that same guilt was paired with anger, directed less at the Soviets than

at his own country's leaders, for the hypocrisy and profligate waste of life the war had brought, and most of all for its having turned ordinary men into criminal aggressors in the name of 'loyalty'. In discussing 1945, a painting he completed in 1959, Kazuki calls such ordinary men 'red corpses'. At one point in his journey into internment,

> I spotted a corpse lying alongside the tracks. No question that it was a Japanese, killed by local Chinese in an act of private vengeance. Stripped of its clothing, it seemed to have been skinned as well … The whole body gave a feeling of having been dried and shrunken, and was reddish brown in color. And then, as if someone had done body-painting on it in red, there were vertical stripes running the whole length of the body … Was it skinned alive, or after being killed? It had fallen halfway into a ditch, with one arm faintly raised as if trying to grab hold of the sky.

'Siberia Series #54', by Kazuki Yasuo

> After returning to Japan, I saw photographs of bodies scorched pitch-black by the atomic bomb at Hiroshima. As I looked at them, the red corpse I had seen in Manchuria, of someone killed out of vengeance and then skinned, floated before my eye. The two corpses, the red and the black, became overlain in my mind. Together, those two corpses tell the whole story of 1945.

For Kazuki, part of that 'whole story' was the story of the suffering of 'innocent everyday people,' of the black-burned victims of Hiroshima and the death camps of Auschwitz. 'Through these black corpses,' he says, 'Japanese were able to form a consciousness of themselves as victims. Everyone joined together in crying out, "No More Hiroshimas!" It's as if there was nothing else to the war but the atomic bombs, I thought.'

But it was now time, Kazuki insists, to speak of the 'infinite number of red corpses', to deal with the mass complicity of common people in the conduct of aggressive warfare. 'The red corpse,' Kazuki declares, 'stands for 1945 as the death of the victimizer.' Why did Kazuki describe that mutilated and violated corpse not as 'black' – innocent of any evil – but 'red'? For Kazuki, its 'redness' derived from the fated role as an atonement or expiation – for 'the other bastards … living as they please somewhere without a care' and 'who should have become red corpses themselves.' Instead, the 'bastards' had escaped his-

tory's judgment. The point for Kazuki is to drive home 'to each and every Japanese … that there is no one with no part in this … More so than for its innocent victims, the tragedy of war is the greater for those who had to become its victimizers.'

On his return, Kazuki renounced his youthful ambition to be a player on the Tokyo art scene and instead made a world of his home town of Misumi, on the Japan Sea. From there, he sought to use his painting to 'soothe the souls of the dead' and imagine a personal and familial world free from the state, past or present. Beyond the record it leaves of the early internment years, his work offers the crucial notion of the 'red corpse', the unwilling victimizer: a human category that extends far beyond the Siberian internment at any phase. I must add that Kazuki died relatively young – he was 62 – his heart weakened, sadly, by years of heavy drinking.

Andrew Barshay

Filipino internees to be released. General MacArthur orders the release of all Filipinos interned by the U.S. Army, stating that his right to detain them has ended with the conclusion of the war. Most of these internees are collaborator suspects. Whether they are guilty or not should now be determined by Philippine courts, but some of those to be freed feel they are absolved.

CCP agrees on talks with KMT. After a comprehensive examination of the international and domestic situations, a meeting of an enlarged CCP politburo concludes that immediate civil war is unlikely. It thus adjusts its strategic slogan to 'peace, democracy and unification'. Based on this decision, Mao soon confirms he will accept Chiang's invitation to discuss China's political future in Chungking.

Chinese reiterate surrender instructions to Japanese. General Ho Ying-chin, supreme commander of Chinese government forces, orders Japanese generals in northern and eastern China to hold and defend all areas they occupy pending arrival of Nationalist forces.

Viet Minh takeover in Hue. Reversing the sequence in Hanoi four days earlier, Viet Minh leaders in the royal capital first send groups to occupy public buildings and Civil Guard barracks and then follow up with a mass meeting in the late afternoon. People notice that many lesser members of the royal family are participating. Moreover, ICP squads hunt down and arrest specific 'traitors', including the former premier Pham Quynh, as well as the former minister Ngo Dinh Khoi and his son, who are brother and nephew of the prominent nationalist (and future South Vietnamese president), Ngo Dinh Diem. No attempt is made to enter the royal palace itself but an ultimatum is delivered that Bao Dai cede power to the Viet Minh. The emperor accepts and next day issues an edict of abdication.

24 August

De Gaulle bluntly reaffirms French intentions in Indochina. Addressing a press conference in Washington, D.C., the French president ignores a personal appeal sent to him days earlier from Emperor Bao Dai, which warned France to abandon its Indochinese ambitions. Rather, says De Gaulle in a call from 'the Mother Country addressed to her children', the French position is simple; 'France means to recover its sovereignty over Indochina.'

De Gaulle was no less forthright when addressing a crowd in Ottawa in 1944, where he demanded respect for French values.

British–Dutch agreement on Indonesia formalized. Although agreed in 1944 in relation to an Allied invasion of Sumatra, only now is the Anglo–Dutch Civil Affairs Agreement formally signed. Its key provision is that areas recaptured by Allied troops will revert to Dutch colonial rule via the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA). On 2 September, it is decided the agreement will apply to all areas of the Netherlands East Indies occupied by British forces.

Mongolian leader celebrates victory and Mongol unification. Speaking at a victory celebration in Ulaanbaatar, the MPR prime minister Choibalsan hails the liberation of Mongol lands from the Japanese and the freedom and independence of their people. The same day, Chiang Kai-shek announces China's agreement to recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia if its people vote for this. Two days later, *Unen Sonin* publishes Choibalsan's speech, highlighting his words on the unification of all Mongols. It will be the last time the party organ writes directly on Mongol unification.

France restored

French Indochina policies from 1945 cannot be understood without taking into account the enduring legacies of the Second World War. France had to overcome the monumental trauma of defeat in 1940. Nonetheless, the country had previously demonstrated its resilience and capacity to rebound after every dark episode in its long history. Once again, French power and status around the world had to be restored. This was De Gaulle's obsession, and in this aim he was largely successful.

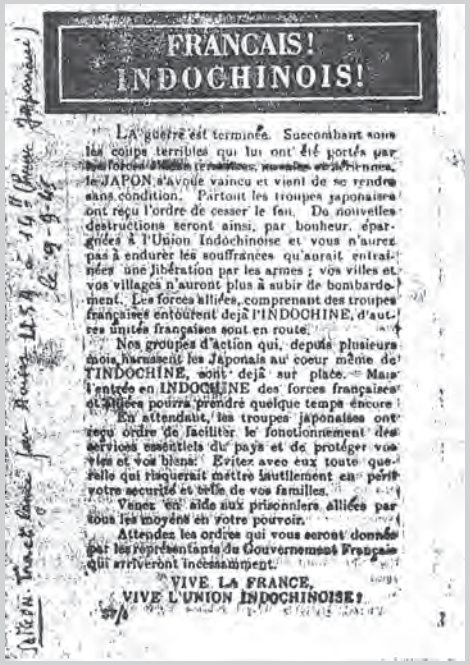
Firmness was the only option to restore French prestige – both within the Great Alliance, not least the United States and China, who were not in favour of France's return to Indochina until 1945, and in the eyes of the colonized peoples, mostly in Indochina where an Asiatic power, Japan, had humiliated the former masters. Britain and the United States were in the same position; they had to restore their prestige after the humiliating losses of Singapore and the Philippines.

Recovering Indochina was the only way for France to remain an Asian power, and therefore a world power. The war had taught that the required attributes of great power were huge territories and resources. Forgetting that in the 1930s Indochina was a strategic liability more than an asset, De Gaulle saw the French Empire (especially its African possessions) as an asset for reengaging France in the war and restoring French status in the world. Gaullists also aimed to be rid of the collaborationist and Vichy legacies in Indochina. Therefore, a kind of Franco–French war took place in Indochina in 1943–45. Numerous French 'colons' and public servants jailed after the March 9th Japanese takeover believed that this coup was a response to the Gaullists' ill-conceived resistance in Indochina, and that they were the main targets of the Gaullists' ire.

Like the Dutch in Indonesia, the French faced a self-proclaimed indigenous government when they tried to restore their rights in Indochina. Indeed, they knew that some reforms had to be implemented in a world transformed by the war. On March 24th, just days after the Japanese coup, a programme was thus issued for a future Indochinese federation of five states (Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina, Cambodia and Laos) within a French Union to be created at the end of the war. Independence was not on the agenda. France remained stuck within this anachronistic road map until 1946.

We have made an oath to reconquer Indochina just as Alsace.

~ René Pleven, French Minister of Colonies, October 1944.



FRANÇAIS!
INDOCHINOIS!

La guerre est terminée. Succombant sous les coups terribles qui lui ont été portés par les forces [illegible], le JAPON s'avoue vaincu et vient de se rendre sans condition. Partout les troupes japonaises ont reçu l'ordre de cesser le feu. De nouvelles destructions seront ainsi, par bonheur, épargnées à l'Union Indochinoise et vous n'aurez pas à endurer les souffrances qu'aurait entraînées une libération par les armes ; vos villes et vos villages n'auront plus à subir de bombardement. Les forces alliées, comprenant des troupes françaises entourent déjà l'INDOCHINE, d'autres unités françaises sont en route.

Nos groupes d'action qui, depuis plusieurs mois harcèlent les Japonais au coeur même de l'INDOCHINE, sont déjà sur place. Mais l'entrée en INDOCHINE des forces françaises et alliées pourra prendre quelque temps encore.

En attendant, les troupes japonaises ont reçu ordre de faciliter le fonctionnement des services essentiels du pays et de protéger vos villes et vos biens. Evitez avec eux toute querelle qui risquerait mettre inutilement en péril votre sécurité et celle de vos familles.

Venez en aide aux prisonniers alliés par tous les moyens en votre pouvoir.

Attendez les ordres qui vous seront donnés par les représentants du Gouvernement Français qui arriveront incessamment.

VIVE LA FRANCE.
VIVE L'UNION INDOCHINOISE!

Locals should assist the restoration of French authority.

It hardly helped here that, at the war's end, France lacked the means to implement its goals; it relied on other powers for the materials, transport and even troops it lacked. Nor was a frustrated De Gaulle allowed to attend the Potsdam Conference in July 1945. There, Truman, Stalin and Attlee decided that, for waging war against Japan after the German surrender, Britain would be in charge of operations in Indochina south of the 16th Parallel, and China to the north. France could be part of the global fight, however, and De Gaulle despatched an Expeditionary Corps to Indochina. But Japan surrendered quickly, long before French forces arrived.

Britain and China were expected to quickly move their forces in on the ground to disarm the Japanese forces, while members of the American OSS already had an active role there. When finally the British and Chinese arrived, they were not necessarily interested in French concerns, though Jean Sainteny in Hanoi and Jean Cédile in Saigon tried to make France's voice heard. General Leclerc's French forces did not arrive until the beginning of October. The inflexible Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, appointed by De Gaulle as High Commissioner for Indochina on August 14th, only set foot on Vietnamese soil in November.

Recapturing Indochina by negotiating, showing off and ultimately fighting was a big challenge at this time. Restoring French credibility as a great power thus triggered wars that devastated Indochina for 35 years and in fact downgraded French credibility in the 1950s.

Pierre Grosser

© Imperial War Museums (HU 60057)

An awkward wartime relationship between the British and Free French, not least between Churchill and De Gaulle, had postwar consequences.

25 August

John Birch murdered. On his way to meet the commander of former puppet forces in the area, OSS Capt. John Birch is murdered by CCP troops near Suchow. The infuriated U.S. commander, General Wedemeyer, confronts Chu Teh immediately and five days later in Chungking he warns Mao and Chou En-lai of grave consequences, but he avoids a showdown; Birch seems to have provoked the incident. Later, Birch is seen as the first casualty of the Cold War and, in 1958, his fate inspires the formation of an ultraconservative, anti-communist society.

Right: Burma National Army soldiers and supporters, early 1945.

French take Lao royal capital. A small French commando force led by Colonel Hans Imfeld enters Luang Prabang and takes charge. It is supported by the Lao king, who seeks a return to the situation before April when, under Japanese pressure, he renounced the French protectorate. His vision is a gradual transition to independence. Lao Issara activists, having heard De Gaulle's calls for the restoration of the French Empire, remain sceptical.

Growing concerns about military situation in Burma. Mountbatten's chief of staff, General 'Boy' Browning, advises his commander to urgently renegotiate the troop integration issue with Aung San and other PBF commanders. Few soldiers of the Patriotic Burmese Forces are currently being selected for the Burmese Army, most being discharged. SACSEA in Kandy is alarmed that PBF/resistance troops might go underground as many soldiers have not surrendered their weapons.

Japanese ceasefire in Malaya. The Japanese military announces it will cease all operations in Malaya at midnight. Having clashed with MPAJA guerrillas over the previous weeks, Japanese commanders broadcast an appeal to the officers of Force 136, the Allied liaison group working with the guerrillas, to cooperate in keeping the peace.

Communist-led forces seize power in southern Vietnam. Although only four days earlier they had joined with fellow Cao Dai, Trotskyist and Hoa Hao members of the United Front in a mass demonstration in Saigon, after days of turmoil the Vanguard Youth now forms a new alliance with the now-openly ICP-led Viet Minh. At a giant demonstration in Saigon, this rickety coalition launches an insurrection in the name of the Southern Provisional Administrative Committee. By the end of the day, the city is secured and Imperial Delegate Nguyen Van Sam is under guard. Further seizures of power follow in cities and towns across the south. However, the situation is far from settled; other groups are angered that the ruling committee has only ICP members or supporters.

Cochinchina – a failed revolution?

For a few brief weeks during August–September 1945, Vietnam was independent. Vietnamese leaders took advantage of a power vacuum between 15 August, when Hirohito surrendered, and 13 September, when British forces physically occupied the country. Unsurprisingly, the story starts a bit earlier.

On 9 March 1945, the Japanese seized power from the French in Indochina. Two days later, the Empire of Vietnam declared an ersatz 'independence' of the former 'protectorates' of Tonkin and Annam, albeit under Japanese auspices. Cochinchina, France's only directly ruled colony in French Indochina, remained under Japanese military rule.

By August, as World War Two hurtled toward its close, a welter of groups in the south jockeyed for power. The Cao Dai, a religious group with a militia trained by the Japanese, controlled areas from northwest of Saigon down into the Mekong delta. The Hoa Hao, a heterodox Buddhist sect led by the charismatic prophet Huynh Phu So, dominated the far west of the Mekong delta. The Vanguard Youth, organized by Pham Ngoc Thach, claimed one million followers throughout the south. A host of other groups, including the Binh Xuyen (who were nationalist toughs) and Trotskyists, also jockeyed for control. And struggling to be at the centre of it all, but weakened by factionalism, was the Indochinese Communist Party. In the communist Tran Van Giau's words, preparation for insurrection in Saigon was 'a race against the clock', as he sought not only to overthrow Japanese administrators but also defend against the British and French, whose arrival was imminent. (In the event, their forces arrived on 13 September and 3 October, respectively.)

Chronicling this period, described variously as the August Gener-

Huynh Phu So, the Hoa Hao prophet. He was caught and executed by the Viet Minh in 1947 after launching a political party opposed to the DRV.

Left: Vanguard Youth pledging their loyalty to the nation, August 1945; right: a Cao Dai military detachment on parade in 1950.

al Uprising or the August Revolution, is complicated and messy. Rival nationalist groups jockeyed for power and held rival demonstrations and yet, in the end, the communists and the Vanguard Youth managed to get many – but not all – of their rivals to join together under the aegis of the Southern Provisional Administrative Committee. The process culminated in a mass demonstration on 2 September, when at least several hundred thousand people (some estimate one million) jammed downtown Saigon and claimed control of the city. This event was replicated throughout the south and brought a fleeting independence to the country.

Vietnamese textbooks imply that the August General Uprising was a violent seizure of power from the French and Japanese. In fact, no significant foreign force opposed the Vietnamese from mid-August to 13 September. The Japanese had interned most French civilians and imprisoned military personnel during their March *coup de force*, so France was in no position to influence the uprising. For its part, Japan did not oppose the Committee, either. General Terauchi promised Pham Ngoc Thach, the Vanguard Youth leader, that, in return for food for his troops, the Japanese would supply French weapons to the Vietnamese and not interfere with the uprising.

Mobilizing for a mass uprising, then carrying it out, was a remarkable success. But while Vietnamese were temporarily unified in opposing the return of the French, political rivalries undermined this unity and, from September 1945 to 1947, the nationalist opposition fractured (see p. 59). It would take a long war, from 1945 to 1954, to bring complete independence – for two Vietnams, one in the north and one in the south.

Shawn McHale

Pham Ngoc Thach went on to hold ministerial and other high official posts in the DRV government.

26 August

Soviet troops occupy northern Korea. After meeting almost no resistance in Korea since the end of the Manchurian campaign, the Soviet 25th Army arrives in Pyongyang. By the end of the month it will reach and stop at the 38th Parallel as agreed with the Americans. In Pyongyang, the Soviets are met by Cho Mansik and other northern leaders. Recognizing the strength of the local councils, the Soviets appoint Cho as head of their interim administration for the five northern provinces.

Soviet soldiers on the march in northern Korea in October 1945.

Informal British take-over in Hong Kong. Within days of receiving orders from London to re-establish British rule in the Crown Colony, its interned Colonial Secretary, Franklin Gimson, establishes an office in the Central district of Hong Kong and starts to maintain order and restore public services with the help of Japanese troops. A day later, Japanese Army HQ in China confirms that Japanese forces in Hong Kong should surrender to the British.

Ho Chi Minh arrives in Hanoi. Having travelled on foot, by boat and finally by commandeered automobile, the Viet Minh leader reaches a secret residence in the city. Remarkably, this is Ho's first time in Hanoi. He immediately invites OSS Major Archimedes Patti to lunch, probing for some sign of U.S. help amidst worries that the French, British and Chinese in tandem will jeopardize the independence of Vietnam. Patti is sympathetic but admits that he can only help by conveying messages expeditiously. Next day, Ho convenes the first cabinet meeting of the recently formed provisional government (composition of which is announced on the 28th). It is agreed that Vietnamese independence will formally be declared on the following Sunday (2 September).

Soviet occupation and the national division of Korea

In August 1945, when the decision to divide Korea – initially for purposes of military control alone – was made in great haste and with little deliberation, neither the U.S. nor Soviet Union had any far-reaching plans for the peninsula's future. However, Cold War logic soon made division almost inevitable.

When Soviet troops arrived in northern Korea, they had little knowledge of the country they were to govern; documents confirm that the 25th Army was preparing to fight the Japanese, not to govern Koreans. Nearly everywhere Soviet troops occupied in 1944–45, the Soviet Union attempted to encourage the creation of pro-Soviet, left-wing governments. However, they quickly discovered that northern Korea had rather prominent right-leaning leaders, but was almost devoid of any significant leftists.

The Soviet government understood that Cho Mansik, the venerable leader of the Nationalist Right, was a likely candidate to lead the emergent government in northern Korea (at least as a figurehead). Cho was allowed to establish his own 'Democratic Party', but the Soviet occupiers also insisted that communists be given some key positions in the nascent provisional local governing organs that emerged – sometimes spontaneously, and sometimes under the Soviet tutelage – in late August and early September.

From September 1945, the USSR began to encourage Korean communists from overseas to come home. One such exile was a former guerrilla field commander from Manchuria, whose bold military exploits in the 1930s attracted some attention before he escaped to the USSR and spent 1942–45 as a captain in the Soviet army. The young officer was known by his *nom de guerre*, Kim Il-sung.

By late September 1945, the Soviet occupation had ensured that these local organs (known as 'people's committees') would include a sufficient number of communists. For a while, the Soviet authorities flirted with the idea of a broad coalition of local anti-Japanese, left-leaning forces. However, such plans seem to have been aborted by early 1946, with the advent of the Cold War.

In December 1945, the Soviet Union reluctantly accepted U.S. proposals to establish trusteeship on the Korean peninsula in order to 'guide Korea towards full independence'. The news about this agreement reached Korea in early January and triggered a massive outburst of popular anger: many Koreans saw this as an attempt to deny their country full independence.

Like other Korean nationalists, Cho Mansik could not accept the trusteeship plan and made clear that he would not cooperate with the Soviets on this and other issues. Admittedly, he was a difficult person to deal with from the very beginning, unwilling to show deference to the Soviet generals and unready to compromise. After his refusal to approve the trusteeship plans, Cho was immedi-

ately arrested, together with some of his most trusted confidants (to be summarily executed in a Pyongyang jail in October 1950). Most nationalist leaders and their sympathizers ran south.

By that time, the Cold War began to intensify, making the Soviet government even less willing to tolerate non-communist governments in areas under Soviet military control. From the spring of 1946, there was little reason to doubt that the creation of a separate state in northern Korea was the most acceptable outcome for Moscow. The Soviet administration began to promote Kim Il-sung, who by that time had strengthened his position among northern Korean communists. In February 1946, he was appointed to head the North Korean proto-government whose composition was decided by the Soviet commanders and included many recent arrivals to Pyongyang from China and the Soviet Union, as well as some local leftists.

Meanwhile, negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union with respect to the status of Korea took on an increasingly pro-forma quality. It is telling that instructions from Moscow to the Soviet representatives largely dwelt on what should be done once the American side rejected Soviet proposals. These proposals were designed to exclude all right-wing and centrist parties in the proposed joint-Korean government on the pretext that these parties had opposed trusteeship and thus were unacceptable to the USSR.

These diplomatic manoeuvres had little actual meaning. By summer 1946, a separate state began to develop in northern Korea and, by 1947, its military commanders began to draft plans for an attack against South. Very similar developments happened south of the 38th Parallel. The Cold War, combined with local agitation, completely destroyed whatever little chance of unification that might have existed in 1945.

Andrei Lankov

Macao and the British reoccupation of Hong Kong

With its Hong Kong Planning Unit set up in London in 1943, Britain was obviously well prepared for a Japanese capitulation that became increasingly imminent after the American bombing of the Japanese homeland and other events. As it transpired, the British Army Aid Group (BAAG) heading up the anti-Japanese resistance in and around Macao alongside the Chinese Nationalists was not assigned a role by British military planners in the liberation of Hong Kong, especially given sensitivity towards Chungking on this issue. Instead, Whitehall (the British Foreign Office) took the running. With Macao being neutral territory and the British consulate there also covertly connected with British military authorities in Chungking, in February 1945 the British Consul, John Pownall Reeves, was

brought alongside in planning for Hong Kong's reoccupation.

On 19 August 1945 Reeves received instructions to facilitate transport of certain internees in Hong Kong, who wished to cross over to Macao owing to food shortages. Besides mobilizing the Portuguese Red Cross to contact Japanese authorities in Hong Kong to facilitate the release of these POWS, Reeves was also charged to coordinate a mission to Hong Kong to make contact with Franklin Gimson, the former Hong Kong colonial secretary held in captivity in Stanley camp (the territory still being under Japanese military occupation). In the event, the mission was assigned to three resistance members, namely Macao comprador and undercover agent Y.C. Liang (leader), the Macanese Dr. Eddie Gosano, and Rogerio (future 'Sir Roger') Hyndman Lobo (the then 22-year-old son of Macao's economic boss, Pedro José Lobo). Departing Macao by sailing junk on the night of 21 August and navigating through mine-strewn waters, the party arrived in Hong Kong the following afternoon. Bearing letters of credential from the British consulate as well as a sealed letter patent, the all-important document drafted by Whitehall as to the reestablishment of British authority in Hong Kong, the party duly made contact with Gimson. As Gosano explained in his memoir, *Hong Kong Farewell*, their party of three (himself, Lobo and Y.C. Liang) 'disguised as fishermen,' reached Hong Kong well before the first British naval vessels arrived.

At Gimson's request, Liang overnighted at Stanley, where he offered a briefing as to local conditions. As conveyed by the 'Gimson note', Whitehall's policy was to restore British sovereignty and order immediately. Gimson was to assume responsibility for an interim administration 'under existing letter patent' until British forces reached the crown colony. In fact, responsibility soon fell to Rear Admiral Cecil Harcourt, who arrived in Hong Kong on 31 August.

The British authorities took an early interest in prospective war crimes cases in Macao. Notably, on 25 August 1945, Liang received instructions from BAAG headquarters to 'report names and full details of war criminals and, if leaving Macao, their intended destinations.'

Having carried out this mission, Liang returned to Macao on 2 September aboard the British destroyer *Plym* to arrange with the Macao governor for the delivery of food supplies to Hong Kong, deemed to be in a 'very disquieting' condition. Back in Macao on 8 September, Liang delivered a first consignment of pork, rice, vegetables and eggs, charged to the Hong Kong government 'under mutual help agreement recently concluded,' and with a second consignment of food delivered on the MV *Fat Shan* on 12 September. The day before, Wilfred Ayock of the British consulate and another resistance delegate from Macao visited Hong Kong to discuss refugee repatriation.

Geoffrey C. Gunn

See also Gosano 1997.

27 August

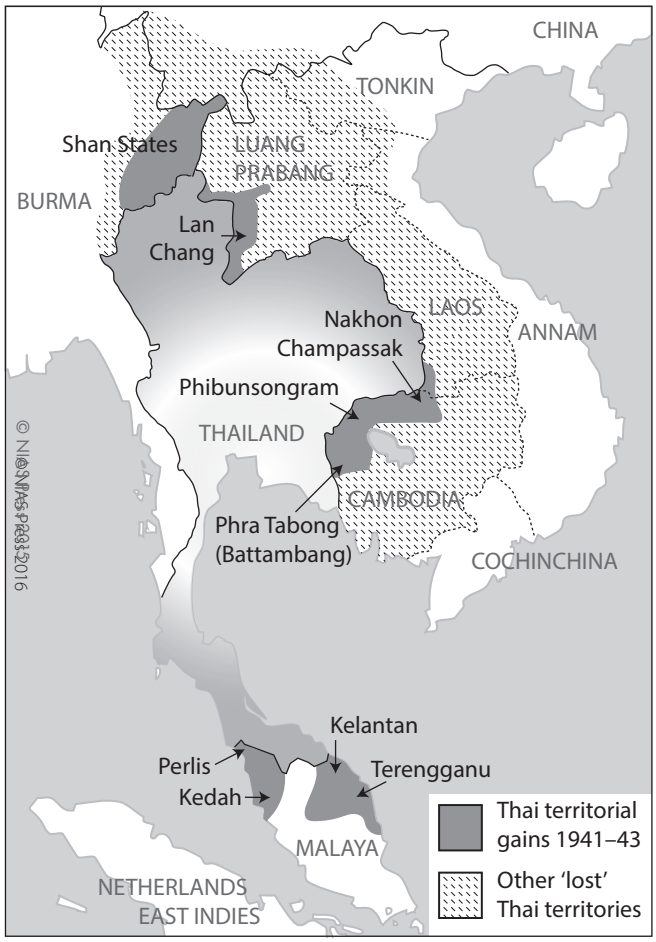
Laotian premier moves to bolster independence. Reacting to local takeovers by French or nationalist forces, the viceroy and head of the Laotian government, Prince Phetsarath, takes control of the country's administrative capital, Vientiane. The Japanese troops previously running the city are repatriated across the Mekong into Thailand to begin their long journey home via Bangkok. Phetsarath immediately authorizes creation of a Lao Issara Army out of the forces Japan had organized into a civic guard. Next day, he notifies all provincial governors that Lao independence remains an immediate goal and warns them to resist foreign intervention. This is part of Phetsarat's strategy of unifying the Kingdom of Luang Prabang with the territories of central and southern Laos, which had been administered as colonies rather than protectorates under the authority of the French *résident supérieur*. This action creates a rift between traditional conservatives and progressive nationalists, who differ in their schedule and framework for the realization of Lao independence.

Malayan Communist Party to cooperate. Malayan Communist Party Secretary-General Lai Tek, who had been a double agent for the British before 1942 and for the Japanese during the war, persuades other members of the Central Executive Committee to adopt a policy of cooperation with the returning British, rather than pursue armed resistance against the reimposition of colonial rule. In return for its cooperation the MCP demands that the British introduce sweeping democratic reforms.

Japanese sign preliminary surrender agreement in Rangoon. Concerned about the power vacuum and growing disorder across Southeast Asia, Lord Mountbatten first protests against the restrictions imposed on SEAC by General Order No. 1 then evades them. He instructs Field Marshal Terauchi to send a delegation to Rangoon, where a preliminary surrender agreement is signed. Next day, Mountbatten names General Douglas Gracey as commander of the Allied forces (including French troops) to be despatched to Saigon.

Major-General Douglas Gracey

France rejects UN arbitration of border dispute. France announces its refusal to submit the Indochina border question to the United Nations and demands the unconditional return of territories ceded to Thailand in May 1941.



Territory ceded to Thailand in 1941–43.

The lost territories: Franco–Thai relations after World War II

After allying with the Japanese during the war, Thailand's road to post-war rehabilitation was fraught with complications. Even before Japan's surrender, Thai leaders began planning reconciliation with Britain and the United States. They failed to anticipate, however, that the primary obstacle to the country's re-entry into the international community would come from France. In August 1945, French diplomats in Kandy informed their American and Thai counterparts that the new Free French government did not recognize the Tokyo Peace Accord of 1941. For France, this meant that a state of hostilities would continue to exist between itself and Thailand until the 'lost territories' were returned to French Indochina.

The border between France and Thailand had been a constant source of tension since its formalization in 1893. In that year, France dealt Siam an embarrassing military defeat and forced King Chulalongkorn to renounce his claim to territories on the left bank of the Mekong. Succeeding treaties transferred additional Lao and Khmer lands to French Indochina. When the Thai military deposed the absolute monarchy in 1932, the new rulers reformulated Thai nationalism based on principles of ethnic chauvinism and irredentism. The Phibun regime identified the 'lost territories' as regions that had been amputated from the body of the Thai nation-state. He argued that its inhabitants were ethnic Thais suffering under French occupation. By 1940, the 'lost territories' represented a growing sense of National Humiliation, the

idea that Thailand had been bullied by western imperialist powers over the last century. By invading French Indochina in January 1941, Phibun intended to erase this legacy of shame and elevate the military to the role of national saviours. The conflict ended with the Tokyo Peace Accord, where Japanese mediators pressed French Indochina to cede portions of Lao and Khmer territory to Thailand. These annexed regions became the Thai provinces of Lan Chang, Phra Tambong, Nakhon Champassak and Phibun Songkhram. In June 1941, Phibun celebrated his triumph with the construction of a 'Victory Monument.'

The acquisition of the 'lost territories' was the greatest foreign policy achievement in modern Thai history; but following Japan's defeat the four provinces represented the country's biggest political liability. Still smarting from its own wartime humiliation, France's new government was determined to re-establish its empire in Southeast Asia (see p. 143). It thus demanded the unconditional return of the four provinces ceded in 1941. When the Thai government delayed, France used its seat on the Security Council to block Thailand's application for membership in the United Nations. As the impasse dragged on into 1946, Thai leaders faced an impossible decision. Keeping the provinces meant exclusion from the United Nations, a critical step in rehabilitating the country's international standing. Ceding territory, however, would stoke popular outrage at home. Thais were convinced that those lands were 'Thai', and blood had been shed to restore them to the nation. Capitulating to France would be considered a shameful act, one that could further de-stabilize the civilian government.

By 1946, the Thai government's options had narrowed. The United States and Britain refused to support its claims to the provinces. France had rejected offers to submit the matter to the World Court. Over the summer, the battle for French Indochina spilled across the Mekong into Thailand. France accused Thailand of aiding the Free Lao forces and rumours of a possible French invasion swirled in the Bangkok papers. In October the fate of the four provinces came up for debate in the National Assembly, with several Assemblyman arguing that war with French was preferable to surrendering the provinces and returning its citizens to colonial servitude.

On 18 October 1946, Prime Minister Thamrong announced his government's verdict: Thailand would return the four provinces to France. He called the resolution 'another sad chapter in our nation's history', but explained that it was necessary to demonstrate the country's commitment to peace and to secure membership in the United Nations. The decision to give back the territories helped weaken confidence in civilian rule (and as such was a factor in the military's return to power in 1947) and led to the Thai–Cambodian dispute over Preah Vihear a decade later.

Shane Strate

28 August

Tough negotiations begin in Chungking. Travelling in the U.S. ambassador's personal plane, Mao flies to the wartime Nationalist capital accompanied by Chou En-lai, Wang Jo-fei and U.S. ambassador Patrick J. Hurley. Hard bargaining takes place in the following six weeks, with disputes focused on the establishment of a coalition government, the scale of each party's armed forces, and the right of control over the 'liberated areas'.

Chou En-lai, Mao Tse-tung and U.S. ambassador Patrick J. Hurley arrive in Chungking.

The road to the second KMT–CCP civil war

Rivalry between the KMT and CCP intensified after the defeat of their common enemy. On 10 August 1945, the CCP's central committee ordered a large-scale counterattack, aiming to seize the main cities and transportation arteries after Japan's surrender. In response, Chiang Kai-shek, apart from requesting that the Communists refrain from independent actions, ordered the surrendered Japanese armies to maintain order and secure military supplies in the occupied areas until KMT forces could assume full control. The KMT's authority to assume such control was underlined in General Order No. 1 (see p. 97).

A third step in the game of chess between the CCP and KMT was an attempt to institutionalize principles and power arrangements between the two. Urged by Stalin, Mao Tse-tung flew to the wartime capital of Chungking on 28 August, in the company of Chou En-lai, Wang Jo-fei and Patrick J. Hurley, U.S. ambassador to China, for six weeks of peace negotiations. Chiang and Mao met eleven times and worked out issues of principle and broad outlines of an agreement, while teams led by Wang Shih-chieh and Chou En-lai focused on the details. Three key issues dominated the discussions: government structure (the CCP was interested in

developing a coalition government), the scale of each party's armed forces, and who would control which 'liberated areas'.

The CCP side made certain concessions, which also served their own interests, including a reduction of its military to between 20 and 24 divisions and an agreement to withdraw troops from several lightly-occupied southern provinces for better concentration on the Northeast. However, none of the major divergences was resolved with proper consensus. Chiang steadfastly insisted that military command and government administration must be unified, thus refusing to recognize the CCP-led governments in the 'liberated areas'. Mao, who had observed 18 years earlier that 'political power grows out of the barrel of a gun', resisted not only the idea of government–military unity but also of Communist armies being completely incorporated into the Nationalist army.

A twelve-clause communiqué was finally issued on 10 October, in which the two parties pledged to accept the principle of peaceful national reconstruction, to resolve any disputes via negotiation, and to ensure the legal and equal rights of different political parties. The CCP recognized the legitimacy of the Nationalist governance over China and abandoned its demand for a coalition government. The two sides also agreed to convene a political-consultative conference and end the phase of Political Tutelage as soon as possible. Despite this document, the negotiations achieved nothing substantial but rather shifted the unresolved problems to another conference.

Main actors in the negotiations – front row from left: Patrick J. Hurley, Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Tse-tung; back row: Chiang Ching-kuo, Chang Chun, Wang Shih-chieh.

Tacit races and clashes for seizing territories, arms and equipment continued throughout the negotiations. On 19 September, the CCP's central committee released a strategic vision of 'developing into the north and defending against the south', that is, deterring the southern Nationalist forces from northward advance and thus alone taking control of Jehol, Chahar and Manchuria. The Soviet army facilitated the CCP by preventing the KMT's entry into these areas and even turned over to the Communists a considerable amount of armaments seized from the Japanese. The Nationalist side took countermeasures. Chiang ordered distribution of *The Manual for Suppression of the Bandits*, which included principles and tactics

Mongol ambitions extended. Five days after representatives from former Manchukuo's Hulunbuir region arrive in Ulaanbaatar asking for unification with the Mongolian People's Republic, party propaganda chief Lkhamsuren convenes a congress in the region attended by all Mongolian banners. This calls for unification of Hulunbuir with Inner Mongolia and their final liberation in a union with the MPR.

Korean interim administration stakes claim for legitimacy. With 145 people's committees now functioning around the country, the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence asserts that it now functions as the temporary national government of Korea. Some rightist nationalists disagree, however, insisting in the legitimacy of the Korean Provisional Government in Chungking.

Courtesy of the *Korea Times*

Members of the Korean provisional government pose in front of the government complex in Shanghai prior to their return to Korea on 13 November 1945.

for defeating CCP forces. Also, with the help of American airplanes and vessels, troops were transferred quickly to the North and Northeast. China, again, was on the edge of a split.

Disappointed by the reality of his ineffective efforts, Hurley announced his resignation on 27 November, accusing State Department officials of favouring the Communists behind his back, as for example when they said that the Nationalists might not use U.S.-provided weapons in the civil war against the communists. President Truman then sent his special envoy, General George Marshall, to continue U.S. mediation in China. The CCP and KMT signed a truce under domestic and international pressures in January 1946 and convened a political-consultative conference, but these helped little to melt the hostilities. The consequent second KMT–CCP civil war concluded with the crushing defeat of the KMT and its major retreat to Taiwan in 1949, the year Mao proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China in Peking.

Li Lin

HMS *Swiftsure* enters Victoria Harbour on 30 August.

British rule re-established in Hong Kong. Colonial Secretary Franklin Gimson formally announces the restoration of British rule. Next day, this announcement is backed up by the arrival of a British fleet of aircraft carriers and cruisers led by Vice-Admiral Cecil Harcourt. This fleet enters Victoria Harbour on the 30th and reoccupies Hong Kong Island. Subsequently, more than 22,000 Japanese troops and civilians surrender to the British.

Liberating Hong Kong

When the news that Japan might accept the Potsdam Declaration reached the Allied powers before dawn on 11 August, British, Chinese (nationalist and communist) and American forces in China all raced to control Hong Kong. Rear-Admiral Cecil Harcourt sailed a British task force toward Hong Kong in support of an order to re-establish British rule. (Intelligence agents of the British Army Aid Group carried this order from the British Embassy at Chungking through the neutral Portuguese colony of Macao and finally to Franklin Gimson, Hong Kong's Colonial Secretary, who was interned in Stanley – see p. 150.) Meanwhile, General Wedemeyer, the C-in-C of the American forces in China, tried to fly to Hong Kong to arrange the surrender of the Japanese garrison. His plane, however, was interned at Canton by the Japanese, as they were unsure to whom they should surrender.

Colonial secretary Frank Gimson (right) greets Admiral Cecil Harcourt (centre) on the arrival of the British fleet.

The British and the Chinese Nationalist governments claimed the right to accept a Japanese surrender in Hong Kong, and both turned to U.S. President Harry S. Truman for support. Truman decided to support the British claim, as long as they would allow Chinese and American forces to use Hong Kong as a springboard to reach other parts of China. The issue

of sovereignty would be addressed later. Chiang Kai-shek thus lost the diplomatic battle and the troops he sent to Hong Kong would arrive too late to make a difference on the ground.

When the Japanese emperor announced his acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration on 15 August, Japanese forces in Hong Kong were ordered to maintain public order and defend themselves. For more than a week, looting engulfed the city, while local Chinese leaders struggled to maintain order with the Japanese and the triads. Meanwhile, dozens of Chinese Communist guerrillas (the East River Column) attacked the Japanese outposts in the New Territories from 18 August, with the goal of controlling the area and seizing the arms of the Japanese forces. These attacks were repelled, but in one case the retaliating Japanese troops murdered a number of villagers in Lantau.

Back in Stanley, Gimson and other interned officials began to imagine the shape of a provisional government. After receiving the British government's order from Macao on 23 August, he negotiated with the Japanese and was allowed to establish a headquarters at Central. By then, it was clear that Hong Kong would be surrendered to the British forces. Gimson, with the aid of other internees and POWs, maintained some essential services and public order before Harcourt's fleet would arrive on 30 August.

Food was in dangerously short supply, even though the population had fallen by two-thirds, to 500,000–600,000. Britain was acutely aware of the problem and its South East Asia Command (SEAC) launched Operation Armour to ship troops, food and supplies to Hong Kong in mid-August. An RAF engineers unit and a commando brigade were diverted to Hong Kong. The former swiftly restored the essential services and communications and the latter took over the New Territories on 14 September. Harcourt's fleet brought urgently needed coal and other supplies. The SEAC also arranged rice and food convoys from Burma, India, Thailand and Australia in the following months, saving the ex-colony from certain starvation.

On 16 September, the Japanese forces in Hong Kong surrendered to Harcourt. A week earlier (on 7 September, coincidentally the same date that the Nationalist troops arrived in Canton), David MacDougall returned to Hong Kong with the HKPU to establish a military administration. Together with the interned officials and the members of the British Army Aid Group, the unit re-established British rule and restored economic activities. This success helped secure Hong Kong's position in international trade and industry in Asia in the coming decades, especially as other Chinese cities were in chaos. The Planning Unit considered many reform programs during the war, including political reforms to allow more Chinese participation. One consensus was that the pre-war *laissez-faire* style of governance had to be abandoned and the post-war government should respond quickly to citizens' needs. This set the tone of the British rule in Hong Kong from 1945 to 1997, a period when the British control of the territory was never seriously contested.

Kwong Chi Man

29 August

Chinese governor of Taiwan appointed. With sovereignty over Taiwan returned to China and occupation of the island by Chinese government troops imminent, Chiang Kai-shek appoints Chen I as Chief Executive of Taiwan Province. In the 1930s, when governor of neighbouring Fujian province, Chen had expressed admiration for the fruits of Japan's economic development on the island. By 1945, however, he is determined to bring Taiwan firmly within the Chinese fold. Although fluent in Japanese, he refuses to speak this language to local elites who cannot speak Mandarin.

Chen I

American POWs airlifted from Thailand. A fleet of eight C-47 aircraft flying out of Bangkok's Don Muang Airport transports 150 American prisoners of war home after toiling along the Thailand–Burma Railroad. Arranged by the American Office of Strategic Services, this is the first large-scale repatriation of POWs from the country. A similar British operation follows soon after.

Photo E.M. McQuillan, courtesy of Australian War Memorial, SUK14690

Left: Allied POWs boarding an RAF Transport Command Douglas C-47 Dakota aircraft on the airfield at Don Muang near Bangkok. Among them were British, Dutch, Javanese and Americans, the first Allied POWs from Siam (Thailand) to be flown out.

30 August

MacArthur assumes power. Two days after an advance party of U.S. Army airborne forces secures Atsugi aerodrome near Tokyo, General MacArthur arrives by plane. Meanwhile U.S. marines come ashore in Tokyo Bay in full combat gear and clearly prepared for Japanese treachery. The next day MacArthur assumes command of the Japanese government in Tokyo. This is the first time in its history that Japan is occupied by a foreign power.

The USS *New Mexico* in Tokyo Bay with Mount Fuji in the background.

Soviet pressure on Mongol leaders about unification. After a visit to the Soviet embassy in Ulaanbaatar by Choibalsan and President Bumtsend, the Mongolian People's Republic begins focusing on securing Outer Mongolian independence and, at least in public, treating calls for Mongol unification with eloquent silence.

General Douglas MacArthur and staff at Atsugi aerodrome.

Royal retraction widens divisions in Laos. At the urging of French commissioner Hans Imfeld, King Sisavangvong retracts the declaration of Lao independence he made under Japanese coercion four months earlier and repeats his support for a French protectorate. Coming two days after Prince Phetsarath's pro-independence moves, this lays bare the rift between the regal and vice-regal lines of the royal family. Divisions are also apparent between those seen as collaborating with the Japanese during the occupation and those who remained faithful to the French, and between traditional conservatives and progressive nationalists who differ on how and when Lao independence can be realized.

Bao Dai formally abdicates. In an emotionally charged event marking the end of a thousand years of Vietnamese monarchy, Bao Dai reads the text of his edict to a huge crowd in Hue during the formal abdication ceremony. 'I would prefer to be a citizen of an independent country rather than Emperor of an enslaved one', he states. Although the ex-emperor agrees to become 'supreme advisor' to the provisional government, he is allowed to go into exile in March 1946.

Installed as head of the Associated State of Vietnam by the French in 1949, Bao Dai failed to play the part expected of him as a counterweight to the communists.

Bao Dai's abdication: the failure of an imperial project

The French colonial administration in Indochina continued to function from August 1940 to March 1945. Indeed, although in August 1940 Japan had declared Indochina to be part of the Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the French regime was left intact as the Japanese needed the French bureaucracy and police to manage the economy and to maintain order. Admiral Jean Decoux, Indochina's governor-general, used his position to preserve as much power as he could and to try to win over the Indochinese sovereigns and their elites by enhancing their prestige. But these elites blamed France for failing to repel the Japanese in 1941; the Japanese occupation helped to revitalize various anti-French movements and to unleash nationalist aspirations. Vietnamese communists in particular now had the opportunity to blend their esoteric dogmas with the more easily understood nationalist cause, which demanded resistance against both the French and the Japanese. Their organizational base was the League for the Independence of Vietnam (Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi) or Viet Minh, which included subgroups called National Salvation Associations. The Viet Minh's objective, as a purely patriotic organization, was liberation of Vietnam from the unholy alliance of the 'colonialist' French and the 'fascist' Japanese.

On 9 March 1945, the situation changed dramatically: the Japanese abruptly disarmed and interned the French. In just a few hours, the French colonial regime was brought to an end: immediate independence was offered to the monarchies of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Two days later, Emperor Bao Dai declared Vietnam's independence: 'the government of Vietnam publicly proclaims that from today the protectorate treaty with France is abrogated and the country resumes its rights to independence'. On 17 March, shredding off the role of a figurehead, Bao Dai sought to assume direct control of state affairs on the principle of '*dân vi*

qúi' (the most precious thing is the people). But, considered to be a king who reigned but did not govern, he could not possibly attract mass support. Further, the new Tran Trọng Kim cabinet Bao Dai installed on 17 April lacked both credibility and the capacity to impose its authority over the provinces (see p. 25). Moreover, the new regime was confronted with a cataclysmic famine in the north, which provided Viet Minh leaders with the possibility of spreading a mass movement of political and social salvation in the countryside.

On 15 August 1945, the Japanese capitulated. The Viet Minh immediately elected a National Liberation Committee to engineer a seizure of power. An uprising later referred to as the August Revolution led to the capture of Hanoi on 26 August, and most provinces of northern Vietnam within days. Common people demonstrated south of the 16th Parallel, including in Hue and Saigon. Bao Dai announced that he was prepared to turn over power to the Viet Minh if that was the people's wish. He issued an edict of abdication on 25 August, which he then read to a large crowd during a formal ceremony held on 30 August in front of the Ngọ Môn gate in Hue. This edict lent legitimacy to Ho Chi Minh's new regime, which was proclaimed on 2 September as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Together with his abdication edict, Bao Dai also promulgated an edict directed at the royal family, reminding them of his attachment to the *dân vi qúi* philosophy and of his vow that he would rather be a citizen of a free country than the ruler of an enslaved one. He called on the members of the royal family to support the new government and preserve Vietnam's independence. Both of these edicts made clear Bao Dai's will to step aside on behalf of the superior interest of the nation. He also affirmed unambiguously that he was transmitting his mandate voluntarily. Before going abroad to live in exile, he briefly served as supreme advisor to the new Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The outbreak of war between France and the DRV in December 1946 highlighted Bao Dai's role as an alternative to Ho Chi Minh. Once France had given way on the two issues of unification for the 3 regions of Vietnam (the 3 former 'Ky' renamed Bac Bo, Trung Bo, and Nam Bo), and complete self-determination for the new Associated State of Vietnam, it was possible to persuade Bao Dai to return from his voluntary exile and preside over the new state. Therefore, in 1949 the French brought Bao Dai back as Head of State (*Quoc Truong*) of the Etat Associé du Vietnam, but without his imperial title.

Bao Dai was to remain head of the non-communist Republic of Vietnam until 1955, when he was overturned by the coup led by his Prime Minister, Ngo Dinh Diem. He lived the rest of his life in France, where he died in 1997.

Nguyễn Thế Anh

See also Bao Dai 1980, Dommen 2002, Lockhart 1993, Marr 1995, Friend 2014, Nguyen 2002.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 019385

Singapore internment camp complete. The Japanese Association completes construction of the Jurong Internment Camp and Syonan's (Singapore's) 6,000 Japanese civilians begin moving into their temporary home and await repatriation to Japan. The situation of surrendered Japanese soldiers is different. Designated 'Japanese Surrendered Personnel' rather than POWs, they will be set to work as unpaid labourers in the rebuilding of Singapore.

Japanese prisoners of war under Indian Army guards fill in trenches they had forced Australian and other POWs to dig some months before.

Not going home – the fate of Japanese POWs

The experiences of Allied prisoners of war at the hands of the Japanese are well documented (see p. 106 for instance). The story of Japanese POWs is less known. Although thousands of Japanese soldiers chose to desert at the war's end (see p. 215) and a few hold-outs remained hiding in the jungle, the great majority of soldiers were prevented from going home, often for several years – and some never returned.

A common fate was to be used as unpaid labourers in the rebuilding of ravaged cities, ports, etc. As the ex-prisoner Ueda Kunitaro later recalled, at least 60,000 surrendered Japanese troops remained in Singapore for several years. 'The British called us Japanese Surrendered Personnel (JSP). That way they could escape international law. If we were POWs, under international law, it was not necessary for officers to work; soldiers moreover could get some small salary.'

The treatment meted out to Japanese POWs captured by the Red Army in Manchuria was even more harsh. Most of the 600,000 taken prisoner were sent to Siberia where they were held in primitive conditions without proper food or treatment and subject to a

There were then at least 60,000 soldiers working in Singapore working parties. They stayed in Singapore more than two years, and the last working party personnel returned [home] only in 1948. For all that time the British used us without any salary and kept us working all the time.

~ Ueda Kunitaro
(courtesy Clay Eaton)

brutal forced-labour regime (see p. 139). About ten per cent vanished inside the Soviet gulag system, never to be heard of again.

However, large numbers of Japanese troops remained armed and on duty, but now under Allied orders. Often their role was limited to keeping order until Allied troops arrived to accept their surrender and take control. But in far too many areas the incoming forces were insufficient and Japanese troops were needed both to guard communications and undertake a policing role. In volatile situations as on Java, Japanese loyalty to their new masters was questioned by some and severely tested by local insurgents (as for instance in Semarang – see p. 260). Former Japanese administrators were also often retained, though not without controversy (see p. 196).

By the late 1940s, most Japanese POWs had been repatriated home and, once there, demobilized. The once mighty Imperial Japanese forces were no more.

A Japanese guard presents arms as a British unit passes by, Saigon late 1945.

I of course knew that we had been forced to keep Japanese troops under arms to protect our lines of communication and vital areas … but it was nevertheless a great shock to me to find over a thousand Japanese troops guarding the nine miles of road from the airport to [Palembang], and to find them drawn up in parties of twenty, presenting arms, the officers saluting with swords which long ago should have been souvenirs.

~ Lord Mountbatten in April 1946 after visiting Sumatra, quoted in Peter Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace: Mountbatten and South East Asia Command*.

31 August

Chinese troops ordered to retake Canton and Hong Kong. Chiang Kai-shek orders General Chang Fa-kuei to send U.S.-equipped troops to reoccupy Canton and Hong Kong. The closest KMT troops, however, are in far-away Kwangsi. Seven days later, these troops enter Canton. A formal Japanese surrender ceremony is held there on 16 September, by which time Hong Kong is firmly in British hands.

Thai prime minister resigns. Thai Prime Minister Khuang Aphaiwong and his cabinet, responsible for maintaining official Thai cooperation with the Japanese during the final year of the war (while turning a blind eye to Free Thai activities in the country), resigns in favour of an interim cabinet headed by Thawi Bunyaket, a Free Thai ally of Regent Pridi Phanomyong.

British naval forces arriving in Hong Kong on 31 August 1945.

1 September

Lao premier calls for international recognition. Responding to King Sisavangvong's declaration of fealty to France, Prince Phetsarath reiterates his rejection of a continued French protectorate and invites the UN to acknowledge Laos' status as a newly independent state.

Dato' Onn bin Jaafar

Uneasy peace in Johor. Around this time Dato' Onn bin Jaafar, future founder of the United Malays National Organization, helps to negotiate an end to Malay–Chinese fighting in northern Johor after ten days of violence.

Civilian rule restored in the Philippines. With the war now ended, U.S. Army participation in Philippine civil administration ends, and press and mail censorship in the country is lifted. Under the leadership of President Sergio Osmeña, the Philippine Commonwealth government takes over all civil functions in the country. However, full independence from the United States has still to be finalized.

U.S. ARMY DROPS ROLE IN CIVIL AFFAIRS SEPT. 1

The POST

SIGN SURRENDER TERMS ON AUG. 31

PHILIPPINE GOV'T FULLY ORGANIZED

Document On Unconditional Capitulation To Be Ratified On Warship In Tokyo Bay

FLASH!

VILLAMIN ON THE SPOT AGAIN

The end of the war in the Philippines witnessed the rise of small newspapers which, freed from Japanese and later U.S. censorship, now grew vigorously. The resurrection of the big newspapers a year or two later would eventually kill the smaller independent papers.

2 September

Formal surrender of Japan is signed. In front of a large group of Allied dignitaries and other officials, the Japanese Instrument of Surrender is signed on the deck of the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. On display at the ceremony is the U.S. flag flown by Commodore Perry in 1853, when his fleet entered Tokyo Bay to force Japan to open its ports to the outside world. The ceremony is broadcast around the world. Later that day, the first major contingents of U.S. occupation troops begin disembarking.

General MacArthur signs the Japanese surrender document on behalf of the United States.

Japanese foreign minister Shigemitsu Mamoru signs the surrender document on behalf of Japan.

After the surrender, American aircraft fly over the USS *Missouri*.

Signatures from the surrender document.

Ho Chi Minh proclaims Vietnamese independence. Speaking to a massive crowd in Hanoi's Botanic Gardens, the Viet Minh leader calls on the Allies to recognize the new Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Even if they don't, Ho asserts that Vietnam will fight for its freedom.

Photo still from original film – reproduced at www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMeqjhaegmE

Ho Chi Minh declaring Vietnamese independence. Judging by Ho's sun umbrella and flutter of fans in the crowd below captured in this film, it was a hot day.

Declaration of Vietnamese independence

The Declaration of Independence read by Ho Chi Minh to a large crowd in Hanoi on 2 September 1945 is one of the most important documents in the modern history of Vietnam. For many at the time it symbolized the end of foreign rule, although that issue would need to be contested in blood for many years thereafter. It certainly marked establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), progenitor of today's state system, although Ho was careful to style his government provisional, pending nationwide elections and promulgation of a constitution.

Only 760 words long, the Declaration was designed to set the overall political tone for both domestic and foreign consumption. Anxious to link Vietnam's present with past world revolutionary traditions, and to bow diplomatically towards Washington and Paris, Ho opened with quotations from the 1776 American Declaration of Independence and 1791 French Declaration of the Rights of Man. Then he stopped short and asked listeners, 'Countrymen, can you hear me clearly?' A roar came back, 'Clearly!', and from that moment forward a special bond was struck.

More than two-thirds of the Declaration is a concise if coloured history lesson. Ho denounced the French division of Vietnam into three administrative systems, the killing or imprisonment of patriots, the sale of opium and liquor to 'weaken our race', expropriation of land and raw materials, and the levying of 'hundreds of unfair taxes. Coming to recent events, Ho asserted that France had 'sold'

> … for more than eighty years, the French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow citizens. They have acted contrary to the ideals of humanity and justice.
>
> ~ Ho Chi Minh, from speech declaring DRV independence

A people who have courageously opposed French domination for more than eighty years, a people who have fought side by side with the Allies against the fascists during these last years, such a people must be free and independent!

~ Ho Chi Minh, from independence declaration speech

the territory of Vietnam to Japan twice in the past five years, despite its claim of responsibility as 'protector'. The populace had become even more poor and miserable, leading to the terrible famine earlier in the year. When Japan capitulated to the Allies, 'our entire people rose up to gain power and found the DRV'. With the abdication of Emperor Bao Dai, the people additionally had overthrown several millennia of monarchism.

In his final passages Ho turned to the immediate diplomatic circumstances. He announced that the provisional government was cancelling all treaties signed by France dealing with Vietnam and was abolishing all French special privileges. Somewhat plaintively, Ho called on the Allied powers to recognize the right of the Vietnamese people to independence in the spirit of the Teheran and San Francisco conferences. If they did not, however, Ho's last passage announced to the world that in any case, 'Vietnam has the right to enjoy freedom and independence, and in fact has become a free and independent country.' The entire people were determined to

Due to concerns about an assassination attempt during the independence ceremony, a cordon of armed guards was deployed. Ho and the other dignitaries were thus a considerable distance away from the assembled crowd.

Ho Chi Minh descending from the podium after delivering the Declaration of Independence.

'mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property, in order to safeguard their freedom and independence'.

Probably not more than two dozen individuals in the 2 September audience of a hundred thousand or more knew for certain that the thin man in faded khaki jacket, introduced by Vo Nguyen Giap as Ho Chi Minh, was the fabled Nguyen Ai Quoc, who had attempted to present a patriotic petition at the 1919 Versailles Conference, become a founding member of the French Communist Party, worked assiduously for the Comintern, and then been reported dead in a Hong Kong jail. Emerging from the void, Ho was suddenly evoking admiration and awe, fulfilling the need of people for a just, invincible leader, projecting the collective dream, weaving the new myth.

Over the decades since Ho Chi Minh stood on that temporary wooden platform in the botanical gardens, the Independence Declaration has become a national icon, with schoolchildren memorizing passages, politicians using it as an authority anchor for policy pronouncements, historians citing it as the pivot-point between colonial slavery and triumphant liberation. Nonetheless, Ho's emphasis in the Declaration on life, liberty, happiness and equality remains unfulfilled in the minds of many contemporary Vietnamese.

David Marr

Uproar in Saigon. In parallel with Ho Chi Minh's independence declaration in Hanoi, a massive demonstration is staged in Saigon. Local reconciliation is hardly promoted when ICP and Vanguard Youth leaders exclude Trotskyists and the Hoa Hao Buddhist group from any lead role in the event. The vast demonstration (as many as one million people, it is later claimed) is mostly peaceful but, after shots are fired at the crowd, some violence breaks out against French residents and those perceived to be their associates and collaborators. A French version of events reaches Rangoon, souring British attitudes towards the Viet Minh in advance of Gracey's departure for Saigon.

Royal struggle intensifies in Laos. In the wake of the Lao king's declaration of fealty to France, Prince Phetsarat proposes that King Sisavangvong endorse the unification of the Lao territories. In the eyes of the Lao monarch this move lacks legitimacy because the southern noble house of Na Champasak seeks autonomy rather than integration and Prince Phetsarat's proposal is above and beyond his station.

First Indonesian cabinet appointed. A Presidential Cabinet led by Sukarno is sworn in during the first session of the Indonesian KNIP proto-legislature, which opened on 29 August with Kasman Singodimedjo in the chair. This cabinet will last until mid-November.

3 September

Formal liberation of Shanghai. A ragged Nationalist Chinese army finally marches into Shanghai to be met by cheering crowds. Although the first U.S. troops entered the city on 19 August, the formal surrender of Japanese troops in Shanghai has been delayed until Chinese government troops could be airlifted in by the Americans from deep inside government-held territory.

Chinese government troops marching along the Bund.

The takeover of Shanghai

On 13 August 1937, Japanese troops and armadas launched a concerted onslaught on Shanghai. After resisting for three months, the Chinese Nationalist army retreated and, with the exception of the 'isolated islets' of the International Settlement and the French Concession, the city was occupied by the Japanese. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, simultaneous military actions intruded into the International Settlement, after which the entire city was controlled by the Japanese and their puppet agents. The bombing of Hiroshima convinced all parties that Japan's days in Shanghai were numbered, its future uncertain. As happened throughout Asia, articulation of interests by national leaders often were at odds with capability and willingness on the ground.

On 9 August 1945, the day the United States dropped their atomic bomb on Nagasaki and the Soviets plunged into Manchuria, the Chinese Communist Party's central committee decided to attack and occupy Shanghai with its New Fourth Army, but later abandoned this strategy in view of the disparity in strength between the KMT and CCP in this region. However, the CCP's underground networks had survived and even expanded during the War of Resistance and contributed to the successful communist macro-strategy of 'surrounding the city with countryside'.

The KMT, for its part, quickly developed a comprehensive arrangement for

Chiang delivers victory speech. On the day of China's national victory celebration, President Chiang Kai-shek calls for priority to be given to economic reconstruction, constitutional democracy and national unification after the war. At the same time, Mao meets Wang Shih-chieh, the chief KMT representative in the ongoing Chungking negotiations, and stresses the CCP's principles.

Photo still from original film – reproduced at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-oFOALoeY0

Chiang speaking to a vast crowd in Chungking on 3 September.

this vital metropolis. On 13 August, the Nationalist government in Chungking appointed Ch'ien Ta-chun as mayor of Shanghai. He arrived to assume his duty a month later. At the same time, General T'ang En-po was assigned to ensure peace, stability and (most important) KMT control in the Nanking–Shanghai region, as a part of Chiang Kai-Shek's national troop relocation in preparation for the takeover of territories occupied by the Japanese. American aircraft and vessels supported these troop movements, but sheer distance and logistical challenges meant that the proper occupation of Shanghai would not be achieved quickly. Hence, Chiang commanded that Chou Fo-hai, Shanghai's wartime puppet mayor, maintain order in the interim with the assistance of the surrendered Japanese army and the KMT's underground agents. Chiang was not in a position to fully enforce this order. Chou Fo-hai believed (correctly) that his collaboration with the Japanese could cost him his life. Prominent members of the puppet government, including Ch'en Kung-po, Yuan Lu-teng, Lin K'ang-hou and several others were to meet the same fate or face imprisonment and confiscation of property.

Chou Fo-hai

During the course of the takeover, disorder and corruption were rampant. Officials of different backgrounds, officers from all ranks, and even merchants and bandits backed by otherwise-competing powers, pursued individual and collective agendas that would baffle any sense of rationality beyond Shanghai's borders. When news of this violence, chaos and corruption reached Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking, he reproached the newly appointed mayor and sent T. V.

Soong, President of the Executive Yuan, to supervise the takeover in Shanghai except those aspects pertaining to military operations. However, even this intervention was not enough to halt the prevailing intrigues, a failure that severely undermined KMT governance of the city after the war.

On 12 September, five days after T'ang En-po arrived Shanghai, the Nationalist government replaced the puppet government's currency with Nationalist legal tender and set a predatory exchange rate of 200:1. In addition, the excessive volume of the new currency led to hyperinflation and further worsened the economic situation in Shanghai. The Nationalists would pay the price for these errors a few years later.

Since the Allies had renounced their treaty rights in China during the war, foreign concessions in Shanghai were not restored after Japan's defeat. For the first time since the signature of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, the city was entirely administered by the Chinese. All assets and industries, except those confiscated as enemy property, were returned to their proper owners after the war. The end of the war liberated not only 3.5 million Chinese residents in this city but also more than 6,000 European, American and Australian citizens interned in the Civil Assembly Center, and the nearly 23,000 Jewish refugees in the Shanghai Ghetto who had escaped the Nazi Holocaust.

Li Lin

French enter Vientiane. A small Franco–Lao force peacefully enters the Laotian capital, releasing French internees and seeking to force the submission of the viceroy, but Prince Phetsarath refuses to recognize the authority of the newly released French *résident supérieur*. The standoff between Vientiane and Luang Prabang continues.

British troops arrive in Thailand. Advance elements of the British occupation force arrive in Bangkok, commanded by Maj.-Gen. Geoffrey Evans. The Thai government is greatly disconcerted by reports that the force, charged with disarming and repatriating Japanese troops, is expected to number as many as 20,000, mainly Indian soldiers.

Australian War Memorial, 117377

Members of the Japanese military police and Kempeitai in Bangkok awaiting transport to POW camps.

SEAC urges publicity for Malayan Union. Learning of the cooperative attitude of the Malayan Communist Party, Lord Mountbatten's Chief Political Advisor urges the British Colonial Office to quickly publicize British plans for a Malayan Union. This would replace the diffuse pre-war organization of Malaya and offer citizenship to long-term inhabitants of the territory regardless of their ethnic background.

Japanese surrender in the Philippines. General Yamashita Tomoyuki and Admiral Denshichi Okochi formally surrender their forces at Camp John Hay, Baguio. Ranking officers of the U.S. Army attend, including General Jonathan Wainwright (who surrendered Corregidor in 1942). No Filipino representatives are present nor did any attend the previous day's signing of the surrender documents at Tokyo Bay. Surrenders of Japanese forces in other parts of the Philippines will take place over the following weeks (though it will be decades before the last Japanese holdouts emerge from hiding). Japanese soldiers are interned in prison camps, while civilians are gradually repatriated to Japan. Many officers and others accused of war crimes are held for investigation and trial while others are expected to be sent back to Japan.

Some Filipino internees to be tried. President Osmeña authorizes the Philippine Solicitor-General to order the provisional release on bail of persons interned or detained by U.S. Army Forces in the Philippines but now being transferred to the Commonwealth government for trial. The first internees are released on the 6th. On the 11th, however, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes cables President Osmeña on the need to try all suspected collaborators with Japan as per Roosevelt's earlier instructions. Ickes threatens that if this is not done soon, relief and rehabilitation funds for the Philippines might be withheld. The telegram pushes Osmeña to speed up passage of a bill to create the People's Court to conduct trials.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Historical Center

Surrender of Japanese forces in the Philippines, 3 September 1945.

Indonesian and Filipino responses to Japanese ideology of empire

'…With one blow you will annihilate the blue-eyed enemy and their black slaves.' Thus spoke a Japanese general early in what they called the 'Great Pacific War,' or 'the Holy War to Liberate a Billion Asians.' The Japanese did not yet possess a perspective enabling them to see that they were engaged in the 'Second World War,' or by other counts, the *n*th world war since that of 1754–1763.

Japanese racism at that time was so rabid that it blocked out other dimensions and supplanted them with notions of their own superiority. As for those white faces with their livid blue eyes – they had good technology, but to the Japanese they were seriously deficient in spirit. They were not motivated by the sacred conviction that the Emperor of Japan was descended from the Sun God, Amaterasu. These mighty conceits were shared by a whole nation – that the divine Sun carried a Japanese name and a Japanese genealogy.

As for all those other peoples to the south: like the Japanese, they grew normal glossy black hair and looked on the world through a pupil in a normal brown iris. Yet they had been conquered by the blue-eyed demons, whom they now served in a slavish fashion. And because their skin tones were more mahogany than the Japanese, they could be dismissed as *the black slaves of the blue-eyed enemy*.

So the Japanese, a people of the perfect skin color, with the correct hair color, and the just right eye color, sharing as they did a sacred history, could sweep through all neighboring countries in a selfless 'Holy War to Liberate a Billion Asians.' They would be received as liberators. In fact, there was some seemly rejoicing in Indonesia, because the Dutch imperialists were so easily and swiftly defeated.

Yet how were the Japanese to explain the fact the Filipinos did not welcome them, but fought fiercely against them? Soon after the liberating armies of the Emperor prevailed, Filipinos set up guerrilla groups against them; steadily harassed and murdered them. How ungrateful could they be?

Across more than three years of the Great Pacific War, few south-

Japanese poster from 1942, aimed at a Chinese audience, celebrating Japanese victories in Southeast Asia over the British, Dutch and Americans.

ern persons voiced the aims of the Japanese more consistently, indeed slavishly, than the Indonesian nationalist leader Sukarno. 'Life and death with *Dai Nippon*!' His fealty was rewarded in being received and decorated by the Emperor in November 1943. Sukarno clung tightly to *Dai Nippon* long after neighboring Filipinos rose up against their 'Asian liberators' in the last months of 1944, and they joined with American troops in driving back and hunting down the hated Japanese.

The futility of acting as surrogates for the Dutch was proven by the English in the battles of Surabaya, late in 1945 (see p. 279). British forces were sensibly releasing their own colonies from imperial neck-yokes; so why attempt the dirty work of resubjugation for the Dutch?

Sukarno continued to clasp preparatory promises for independence made to him by the Japanese in Saigon, even while Hiroshima and Nagasaki were being 'carbonized.' Together with Mohammad Hatta, he proclaimed independence on 17 August 1945, two days after the Emperor had proclaimed acceptance of Allied terms of 'unconditional surrender.' Sukarno did not form a cabinet until 31 August. Hatta maintained his integrity and a healthy distance from the Japanese (whose Kempeitai, secret police, had planned to kill him). But his deficits of charisma kept him subsumed to Sukarno.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, detachment from the Japanese and his compelling charm enabled Manuel Roxas to win election as Senate President under Sergio Osmeña, who had returned from exile in the USA. Then Roxas parlayed his endorsement by General MacArthur into victory for the national presidency.

Net: The pale mustard imperialists won precious few devotees in insular Southeast Asia. The allegiance of Sukarno was a rare exception. The hostility of Filipinos was the rule. After the Emperor implored the Japanese to 'bear the unbearable,' only individual soldiers hid out in jungles, living off roots and rotting dreams.

The simple act of America having promised independence in 1934, and scheduled it for 1946, accounts for the extraordinary loyalty of wartime Filipinos. The Dutch, however, reaped only the vainglory of intending to remain in Indonesia forever.

Theodore Friend

See also Friend 2014 (1988).

Poster publicizing Japanese support for Philippines independence.

4 September

Americans arrive in Cochinchina. Tasked to investigate war crimes, protect U.S. property, locate and assist Allied POWs and gather intelligence on southern Indochina, an Office of Strategic Services team led by Lt.-Col. Peter Dewey enters Saigon more than a week earlier than General Gracey and his British-led force. The Americans are greeted cordially by Japanese authorities in the city and are immediately approached by DRV adherents with a letter making the case for Vietnamese independence. Within a fortnight, the team accomplishes the release and repatriation of several hundred U.S. POWs. Its continued presence in Saigon thereafter will annoy Gracey, who opposes any American presence in Indochina. He is also angered by Dewey's willingness to engage with the Viet Minh.

Peter Dewey

Thai negotiators refuse to sign interim military agreement. Thai–British negotiations on a peace treaty get off to a rocky start at SEAC headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon when Thai negotiators reject Lord Louis Mountbatten's demand that they sign an interim military agreement; they complain that it also deals with political matters. Col. John Coughlin, the local OSS commander who radioed the document to Washington, shares their concern.

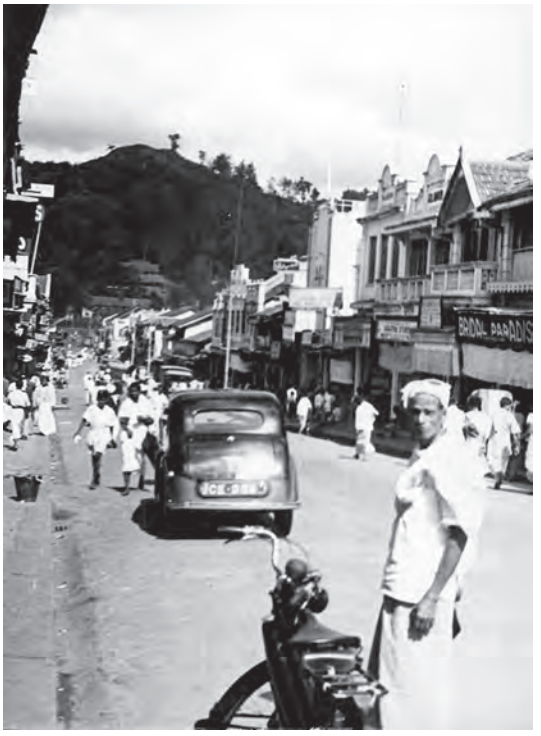


Photo: Germaine Krull

Kandy, scene of a series of important meetings in early September 1945.

Making peace with the British in Thailand

As the one independent state in Southeast Asia and a formal ally of Japan, Thailand faced real obstacles to peace making with Great Britain at the end of the war. Unlike the United States, Britain had responded in kind to the Thai declaration of war in January 1942 and had been directly and adversely affected by Thai support of Japan's Malaya and Burma invasions. Also, the Japanese had ceded portions of British Malaya and Burma to Thailand in 1943 in fulfillment of a secret Thai–Japanese agreement. Regent Pridi Phanomyong had attempted to ameliorate the damage by cooperating with the British Intelligence organization Force 136 in the last months of the war, promising the return of the British territories, and renouncing the Thai declaration of war as unconstitutional (see p. 87). However, it remained uncertain in late August 1945 if these initiatives would placate the British.

Earlier, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and others in the British government perceived an opportunity to wrest territory from Thailand in the Kra Isthmus that would enhance the security of Malaya. Although this idea had been abandoned by the summer of 1945, the British were determined to extract reparations from Thailand for the business and personal losses of their citizens and had their eyes on surplus rice in Thailand that would be sorely needed to avert famine in Malaya. Most British officials were inclined to drive a hard bargain in making peace with the Thai.

Pridi's best advantage was the attitude of the United States, which had ignored the Thai declaration of war and viewed Thailand's position sympathetically. The Americans saw an opportunity to win Thai favor and gain a foothold for trade and influence in postwar Southeast Asia by adopting a lenient stance. They had pressed the British to adopt a similar policy, but the responses from Washington and London to Pridi's disavowal of the declaration of war clearly revealed remaining differences.

The Anglo–American rivalry over Thailand surfaced again in early September when Lord Louis Mountbatten, head of the Southeast Asia Command, demanded that Thai representatives sign a 21-point military agreement prior to the entry of British occupation troops. The Thai and Americans immediately judged it a political document. The local commander of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) radioed Washington and urged effective American intervention. This ironically became known after Regent Pridi had reluctantly agreed to accept the British terms. In the meantime, M. R. Seni Pramoj, the new Thai prime minister and former ambassador to Washington, arrived on the scene convinced that the U.S. could be induced to block any undesirable British demands.

Anglo–Thai negotiations resumed,

Chris Turner, courtesy of the Interservices PR Directorate, India, item SPU/778

Japanese forces in Malaya surrender. A day after SEAC forces land on the island, the formal surrender ceremony for Japanese forces in Malaya takes place on HMS *Nelson* off Penang. With its troops now pushing their way south to Singapore, SEAC tells the Japanese to treat MPAJA guerrillas as Allied forces.

Left: Japanese surrender delegates discuss surrender terms aboard HMS *Nelson*.

but broke down again in October. The British once more demanded that their counterparts stop quibbling and sign on the dotted line, but just then chief British negotiator M. E. Dening was called away to deal with affairs in Jakarta. In the ensuing weeks, Washington dithered over how much to intervene, the British disagreed among themselves about the wisdom of Dening's negotiating tactics, and the Thai remained uncertain of how much they could depend on American assistance. On the latter point, Seni quarreled with Pridi and his own cabinet members about how resolutely to resist.

Seni Pramoj

Seni launched a personal campaign to influence American public opinion against the British, but before it was clear that it had borne fruit, the Thai cabinet decided it would have to accept the British terms. Concerned in part about gaining Congressional approval for a post-war loan to Britain, the State Department intervened in mid-December, urging a delay in the negotiations until U.S. concerns were taken into account. This led to some modification of terms, particularly in regard to the British rice demands, and the signing of an Anglo–Thai peace agreement in Singapore on 1 January 1946.

Seni would ever after claim to have saved Thailand from the British, and the Americans would bask in the praise they received as Thailand's saviors. The British had gained little from their hard line negotiating stance, as they were soon forced by the realities of the postwar situation to modify their policy toward Thailand to one closer to that of the United States.

Bruce Reynolds

5 September

First description of Hiroshima devastation published. The London *Daily Express* publishes Wilfred Burchett's 'scoop of the century', an account of his visit to Hiroshima three days earlier, the first by a western journalist after the atomic bomb was dropped. 'The Atomic Plague' is the first public description in western media of the effects of radiation and nuclear fallout. Burchett's account begins, 'I write this as a warning to the world.'

DAILY EXPRESS

THE ATOMIC PLAGUE

'I write this as a warning to the world'

DOCTORS FALL AS THEY WORK

THE PICTURE THAT DOES NOT TELL THE WHOLE STORY

The big switch: 'Over by spring'

3,320,173 AMAZES AMERICA

MAN IS STABBED DURING DANCE

Forces may cut meat ration

SPAIN TO SHARE IN TANGIER

Queues for St. Leger

RUSSIA HAS NOT INQUIRED

BOURNVILLE COCOA

Front page of the *Daily Express*, 5 September 1945.

Increased Vietnamese involvement in Laotian affairs. Prince Phetsarath is contacted by his half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong, who for the last 16 years has been working as a civil engineer in Vietnam. Souphanouvong explains he is in Hanoi negotiating Vietnamese support for the Lao independence struggle. The viceroy rejects the overture; he has long held anti-Vietnamese views and is already concerned about Viet Kieu involvement in the nationalist movement. Indeed, only days earlier Viet Minh-allied forces in Thakhek organized local youth into armed units to oppose the French. These Lao–Viet units will become the model for future joint Lao Issara and Viet Minh collaboration.

Souphanouvong, Ho Chi Minh and Bao Dai in Hanoi.

Independence referendum in Cambodia. Prime Minister Son Ngoc Thanh announces the results of a national referendum that undoubtedly never took place. It is claimed that 540,999 Cambodians supported independence from France and only two voters were opposed.

Photo: Captain E.A. Taylor, Royal Navy

A British flag flies above a cheering crowd during the arrival of the 5th Indian Division at Singapore, marking the end of three and a half years of Japanese occupation.

'Syonan' is Singapore again. British forces land in Singapore, assume control over government buildings and immediately establish a military administration according to Mountbatten's Proclamation No. 1. Japanese Syonan is no more.

Yogyakarta declares for the Republic. Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX of Yogyakarta in Central Java sends a letter to Sukarno, expressing his support for the newly born nation of Indonesia and acknowledging the Yogyakarta Sultanate is part of the Republic. The region receives the status of a special territory. Four weeks will pass before Japanese troops in the city actually relinquish power.

Chinese community in Singapore carrying the flag of the Republic of China to celebrate the victory. Emblazoned with 'Long live the motherland', this reflects local Chinese identity issues at the time.

Australian War Memorial, 117053

Japanese and Portuguese officers await arriving Australians.

East Timor reverts to Portuguese authority. Portuguese (East) Timor accepts transfer of authority from the Japanese, although the Australians insist upon a separate ceremony in Dili, alongside the official Japanese surrender ceremony conducted in Kupang (West Timor) on the 11th. Portuguese and local communities look forward to the arrival of Portuguese relief ships and truly welcome them when they appear on the 27th.

Portuguese administration restored on Timor (and Australian powerplays)

It is clear that, by war's end, both Australia and Portugal intended to take and enforce the terms of surrender of the Japanese in Portuguese (East) Timor. According to W.D. Forsyth, the senior Australian diplomat concerned, by August–September the Australian government was determined that Australia would take the lead. Australia, he argued, had earned this privilege because it alone had resisted the Japanese. Further, Portuguese 'neutrality had helped the Japanese to turn (Timor) into a base' during the war and this sort of 'neutral power' should have no military role in the termination of hostilities (especially as Portugal was not a belligerent in the war). Portugal rejected these overtures outright, not wishing to experience a double Australian violation of its sovereignty (a reference to the pre-emptive Australian–Dutch invasion of Portuguese Timor in February 1942). A compromise position was accepted whereby an Australian military mission would act with the assistance of the Portuguese administrator.

Events moved quickly. On 15 August, the Japanese Foreign Ministry informed its head of mission in Lisbon, Morishima Morito, that Japan was proceeding to restore Portuguese Timor to Portuguese control. On 5 September, three days after the formal surrender ceremony on the battleship *Missouri* and four days after the Japanese military commander in Dili, Colonel Yoshioka, accompanied by Consul Suzuki Yoshitaro, communicated an 'end to hostilities' to Portuguese Governor Manuel de Abreu Ferreira de Carvalho, Tokyo notified the Portuguese government that the colony was restored to Portuguese administrative control. The following day (6 September), the Portuguese Foreign Office informed the Allies that Portugal viewed the occupation of Portuguese Timor by Allied troops 'with disfavour,' especially as Portugal wished to settle outstanding questions by direct negotiation with Japan, which had already ceded *de jure* control to Portugal. Both Portugal and Japan had anticipated this endgame and had long been in conversation as to Japan's breach of Portuguese neutrality; Portuguese Premier António de Oliveira Salazar was adamant that a withdrawal of Japanese forces occur sooner rather than later, not only to restore the colonial status quo ante and facilitate the arrival of relief ships, but

The post-war years saw a flood of bestselling wartime memoirs, among them Carlos Cal Brandão's *War in Timor*, published in 1953. In 1932 the anti-fascist Brandão was deported from Portugal to Timor for fomenting anti-Salazar revolutionary activities. He survived the war by joining a guerrilla group, later retreating by submarine to Australia to join the Allies. The book continued to be a bestseller in Portugal, each subsequent edition featuring a slightly more grotesque cover image. Now back home in Portugal, however, Brandão was arrested again.

possibly also to burnish his image with the Allies. In line with post-surrender realities in Japan, on 13 September 1945, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru communicated to Minister Morishima that Japan awaited Allied instructions as to the terms of the arms transfer issue in Portuguese Timor.

As a prelude to the Australian-staged 'restoration' ceremony in Portuguese Timor, on 11 September 1945 Australian Brigadier Lewis Dyke accepted the Japanese surrender on behalf of the Allies in Kupang, West Timor. Two weeks later, on his arrival in Dili, Dyke congratulated Governor Ferreira de Carvalho on the restoration of Portuguese rule. The party established that there were no Australian POWs in the colony and that only 200 Japanese remained. The Australians were also keen to enlist the Portuguese in facilitating the investigation of Japanese war crimes, namely those committed against Australian commandos in Timor. According to a witness, the 'restoration' ceremony of 26 September was 'a short and simple affair, held in front of the landing stage from which the Portuguese ensign flew.'

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 119611

Portuguese Governor Manuel Ferreira de Carvalho (right) and Australian Brigadier L.G.H. Dyke at the Governor's residence.

On the following morning (27 September), two Portuguese relief ships, *Bartolomeu Dias* and *Zarco,* finally arrived after a long delay. As reported in *Diario de Noticias* an 'impressive' ceremony held beneath the tottering colonnades of the bombed-out Camara Municipal evoked a pathos of wartime suffering and patriotism as well as regeneration of the colony. In attendance were most surviving Portuguese, many local Timorese, the *moradores* or local military forces from Baucau and Manatuto, loyal chiefs and a grand display by Timorese brandishing venerated ancient Portuguese flags that had been hidden during the Japanese occupation. This was significant because, despite Japanese attempts to sow enmities among the local population (including the small Arab community), the colonial authorities were not met by resistance activities. The arrival of the ships was more than just symbolic. Besides bringing 2,223 troops, including infantry and artillery, the mission included three engineering companies and substantial supplies of food and construction materials, thus staving off the kind of starvation and chaos that ensued in the wake of other Japanese surrender acts.

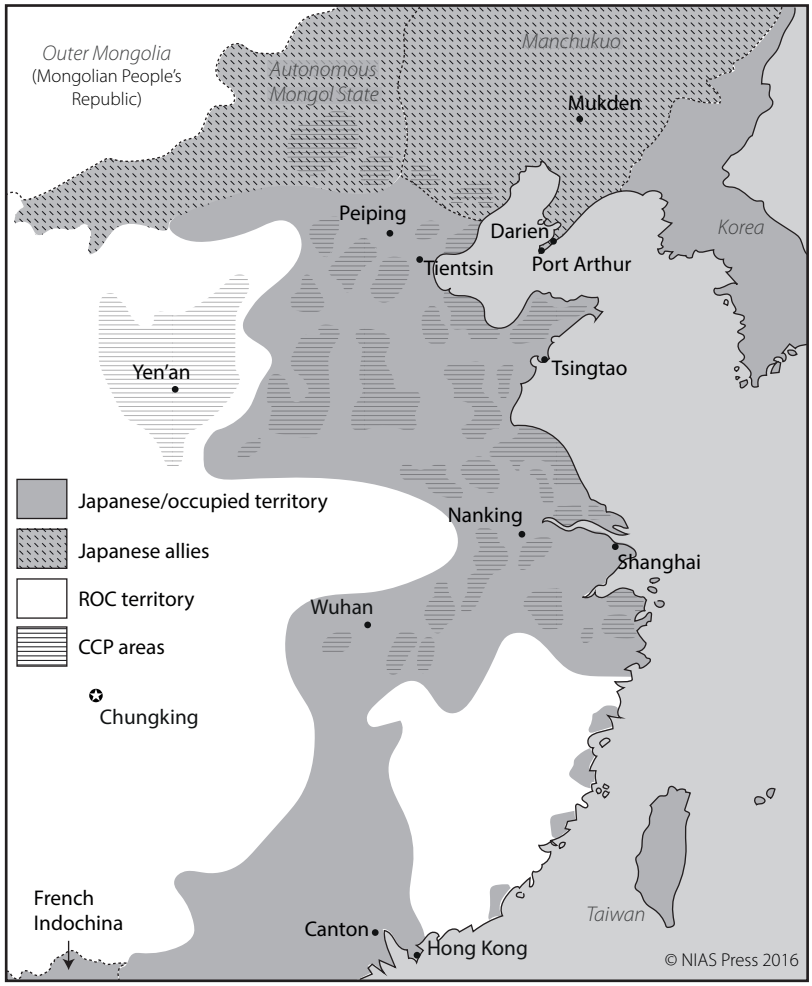
Geoffrey C. Gunn

See also Gunn 1999.

6 September

Korean People's Republic proclaimed. Hearing that Korea is to be divided between Soviet and American occupation forces, CPKI leaders are faced with the impending arrival of U.S. troops in the south. They thus seek to strengthen their position by calling a national convention in Seoul. Here, in front of thousands of delegates, Yŏ Unhyŏng proclaims the Korean People's Republic as the de facto government of the country. Although the cabinet that is appointed is dominated by leftists, it also includes rightists like Cho Mansik. Moreover, delegates elect the veteran nationalist Syngman Rhee, a rightist, as president without his knowledge or consent. Rhee later rejects the honour.

Chinese Communist forces enter Mukden. The first units of the Eighth Route Army enter Mukden and receive captured Japanese military equipment from the Soviets. The CCP strategy now becomes to strengthen its position in the north and remain on the defensive in the south. More troops under the command of Lin Piao enter Manchuria and establish themselves in rural areas.



Based on a map from the U.S. Military Academy's Department of History

The shape of the CCP's northern strategy – communist bases and Japanese-held territory at the war's end.

7 September

British begin rebuilding of Hong Kong. A British planning unit formed in 1943 to prepare for the re-occupation of Hong Kong arrives in the colony, establishing a British Military Administration (BMA). This body begins to provide relief, rebuild the government, restore infrastructure and resettle the currency of the colony. The first British food convoy arrives later in the month, saving the colony from possible starvation. The swift rehabilitation of Hong Kong allows the resumption of international trade by December. The BMA will continue until May 1946, when the civilian government is re-established.

Photo still from original film at http://www.scmp.com/news/china-insider/article/1496656

Hong Kong street scene from September 1945. Most parts of the city were far more damaged or slum-like (as well as crowded) than this area.

Growing opposition to Viet Minh in Cochinchina. ICP attempts to consolidate power in the south backfire when the southern Viet Minh supremo, Tran Van Giau, orders the disarming of all unofficial organizations; all weapons to be surrendered to the Viet Minh 'Republican Guard'. The decree is directed not only at the religious sects and factory-based self-defence groups led by the Trotskyists but also at the ICP's erstwhile Vanguard Youth allies. Trotskyists issue a call to arms. Next day there is a violent clash in Can Tho, a key town in the lower Mekong Delta, between Hoa Hao demonstrators and a force of Vanguard Youth and ICP troops. Contestants provide contradictory accounts of the clash and its origins but it ends with many Hoa Hao dead. Subsequently, Hoa Hao followers are incensed when the ICP arrests many fellow members and executes the key leaders of the demonstration. Tension is also building with the Cao Dai, partly because of Viet Minh imprisonment of its leaders and the mass killing of Cao Dai followers in Quang Ngai province.

Thailand's name reverts to 'Siam'. Due to complications in the peace process with the British, the Thai government announces the return to the use of 'Siam' as the country's foreign-language name.

Siam or Thailand?

The history of Thailand's foreign language name reflects the ongoing debate over the nature of the country itself. Thais have traditionally referred to their country as 'mueang thai', meaning, 'land of the Thai'. During the early modern period, foreigners adopted the Sanskrit word, 'sayam', a term most likely invented by Indian traders. By the nineteenth century, the country's official title used in English language treaties and correspondence was the 'Kingdom of Siam'. British visitors labeled the inhabitants as 'Siamese', even though those people thought of themselves as 'Thai'.

In the twentieth century, a new generation of leaders attempted to move Thai society away from its royalist heritage. The military regime of the 1930s admired the race-based nationalism they saw in Italy and Germany and hoped to emulate its success at promoting unity. On 24 June 1939 the government issued an official edict changing the kingdom's foreign name to 'Thailand'. The Prime Minister, Phibun Songkhram, reasoned that the name of the country should correspond to the racial identity of its people. This directive was part of a larger campaign to pressure religious and ethnic minorities to embrace the 'national' culture being formulated by the military regime.

Detail from a Thai government poster from the Phibun era pointing to 'uncivilized' and 'civilized' forms of dress.

Phibun's ill-fated alliance with Japan and subsequent fall from power discredited most of his cultural reforms, including the name change. Under the leadership of Pridi Phanomyong, the Thai government renounced its pro-Axis past in order to improve relations with the Allies. On 7 September 1945 state leaders announced that they had changed the country's foreign-language name back to 'Siam.' This reversal lasted only three years. The civilian government was overthrown by a military coup in 1947. Phibun's return to power in 1948 brought with it the restoration of the name 'Thailand'.

Even today, the country's foreign language name is the subject of some controversy. The name 'Thailand' enjoys the support of ruling factions seeking to maintain cultural uniformity, while other groups seek to restore the name 'Siam' along with a greater sense of ethnic and religious pluralism.

Shane Strate

Burma military agreement concluded in Kandy. Following a two-day conference at SEAC headquarters, the future shape of the Burma Army is reached. Participants include Mountbatten, Aung San, PBF commanders, high-ranking British military officers, returning Governor Dorman-Smith, civil representatives of the AFPFL, and colonial officials. The Kandy Agreement determines that 5,200 troops and 200 officers of the PBF will be accepted as the core of the regular Burma Army, which will be gradually transformed into a professional, Burmese army. The British also give official 'war credit' to Burmese resistance fighters.

Among the participants at the Kandy conference was General William Slim, commander of Britain's 'forgotten army' in the struggle to retake Burma from the Japanese. Although later he would write that he was impressed by Aung San, at the time of the Allied victory he generally sided with those wanting to try Aung San for collaboration and murder.

The birth of Burma's modern army

The treatment of the Burma National Army (BNA) and its commander, Aung San, was one of the most contentious issues during the British reoccupation of Burma. Had the Governor of Burma, Dorman-Smith – still in exile in Simla – got his way, the BNA would have been declared illegal and dissolved. Aung San would have been arrested as a traitor for his cooperation with the Japanese and charged with war crimes. However, Supreme Allied Commander Mountbatten was anxious to avoid a civil war. He decided to secure the cooperation of Aung San, who was for him the key figure controlling thousands of highly politicized troops. To neutralize the 'revolutionary energy' in the country, Mountbatten intended to incorporate capable troops of the BNA – renamed Patriotic Burma Forces (PBF) in June 1945 – into the regular Burma Army and offer Aung San the position of a Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) at the rank of a Brigadier.

In early August, however, the strategy of co-option failed. Aung San called off the process and demanded renegotiations. His political survival was at stake. The British had selected only a small fraction of PBF troops for the Burma Army; the rest were discharged and sent home with two months' pay. The dissolution of 'his' army

You must decide to be a Churchill or a Wellington; you cannot be a soldier and political leader at the same time.

~ Mountbatten to Aung San at end of Kandy meeting

meant losing his revolutionary posture and military capability, thus weakening him vis-à-vis both the British and his communist rivals within the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. The communist AFPFL president, Thakin Soe, had already won cadres within the troops and was calling for an armed struggle. Therefore, Aung San's whole focus became the preservation of a loyal army. At Naythuyain (see p. 85), he demanded that the PBF form the core of a new national army into which units of the regular Burma Army should be incorporated. He repeated this message in several venues, stressing the right of a nation to defend itself and to build its own national defense forces.

When the British noticed with alarm that PBF troops were withholding weapons, ready to go underground, renegotiations seemed critical. Thus, on 6 September, Mountbatten met with Aung San, six PBF commanders and four political representatives of the AFPFL at the headquarters of the Supreme Allied Command in Kandy, Ceylon. High-ranking British military and civilian officers including General Slim and Governor Dorman-Smith joined Mountbatten on the British side. At the outset, Mountbatten acknowledged the wartime contribution of Burma's resistance troops, ostensibly an important gesture of accommodation. He affirmed that they had been on the Allied side before 1945, contrary to common accusations among the British of Burmese betrayal and opportunism.

The next day, a middle ground was found regarding the PBF. With the 'Kandy agreement', around 5,000 troops and 200 officers of the PBF were to form the core of a new ten-battalion national army into which colonial Karen, Kachin, and Chin battalions would be integrated. The British insisted on maintaining class battalions based on ethnicity. The future army would thus consist of three Burmese infantry battalions, two battalions of each ethnic group, and one ethnically mixed battalion. Within the Burmese field artillery regiment, a battery was to be reserved for Karens. The ethnic-based balance of power perpetuated the colonial *divide et impera* policy that eventually led to deep mistrust between the ethnic groups in the army. The arrangement fell apart after independence when the Karen battalion joined the rebellion led by the Karen National Defense Organization in 1949. Nevertheless, the Kandy agreements were an achievement for Aung San. Though a compromise, he accomplished the task of creating the national army that he envisioned.

In the end, the birth of Burma's modern army neutralized the 'revolutionary energy' only temporarily. Given that Dorman-Smith's civilian government was returning in October, Aung San declined the DIG position and shed his uniform to lead the AFFPL as a civilian. Mountbatten had warned Dorman-Smith in Kandy that actual political concessions were needed to gain the trust of the na-

tionalists. But the governor rejected any departure from the White Paper or accommodating the AFPFL. In November, Aung San formed the People's Volunteer Organization (PVO) mainly with discharged resistance fighters. The PVO quickly became the third-largest group within the AFPFL, soon reaching over 50,000 troops. Aung San resumed the strategy of political demands mixed with threats of armed struggle – only now with a more credible, militarized power base.

Susanne Prager-Nyein

'Banana money' declared worthless. Faced with hyperinflation in Malaya as a result of massive printing by the Japanese of their wartime currency, the British Military Administration (BMA) demonetizes the currency; only pre-war and a new post-war currency are legal tender. The widespread economic pain this causes is alleviated by government handouts. However, due to the financial and economic upheaval caused by the demonetization policy, the BMA would come to be derogatorily known as the 'Black Market Administration' owing to the widespread corruption of its staff.

Banana money

Banana money: Malaya's wartime currency

After Japanese forces occupied Malaya early in 1942, they introduced new currency notes. Because the $10 note carried a picture of a banana plant, the wartime currency was referred to as banana money. For the first two years of the occupation, the Japanese maintained monetary discipline and kept circulation of this currency under control. However, with the country's trading economy at a standstill, there was little to tax and, in order to fund the civil administration and purchase supplies for the military, the Japanese began printing more and more money. In December 1940, the active circulation of currency in Malaya

was 120 million dollars. By the middle of 1945, the Japanese may have printed 4,000 million dollars, and the active circulation was 30 times greater than before the war. The predictable result was hyperinflation.

By the middle of 1945 Japan's wartime currency had lost most of its value. Any refusal to accept Japanese currency at face value implied a lack of confidence in the Japanese administration and was very dangerous, but the population relied on the black market for supplies of routine goods, and there prices soared. The cost of food in Singapore shot up to 160 times pre-war levels, and there were similar rises in the price of clothing, transport and other basic expenses. In the final months of the occupation, the Japanese printed even more currency notes, including $1,200 million held in reserve in Singapore to meet contingencies during possible military operations.

The Bank of England argued that some value should be given to the occupation currency, but in view of the vast amounts in circulation, the British Military Administration decided that it was preferable simply to give away supplies for free on an interim basis. The wartime notes were demonetized immediately after British rule resumed. With this measure pauperizing much of the population, the BMA acted quickly to get new money into circulation, paying civil servant arrears of salary and advances, buying stocks of rubber and rice, and hiring labour. At the end of September $8 million had been paid out, and by the end of the year the figure was $160 million.

Banks held large quantities of occupation currency in their vaults. As the beneficiaries of Japanese forced savings campaigns, carried out in an effort to reduce the money in circulation, the banks had received large deposits. Lacking suitable opportunities to invest this windfall, they had simply stored this money in their vaults. When the occupation currency became valueless, it was destroyed. The sheer volume created logistical problems, and in one case a bulldozer was used to shove stacks of money into the sea.

To facilitate distribution of the new currency notes, the Financial Secretary on 15 September urged non-Japanese banks to resume operations. To provide the banks with working capital, the government opened interest-bearing accounts where they deposited funds amounting to 5% of pre-war deposits held by each bank, and offered the banks loans at 3% interest. Individuals proved to have hidden significant amounts of pre-war currency, and much of it flowed into savings accounts when the banks began accepting deposits. The government had prepared new banknotes worth $234 million, but by the end of 1946 the amount of money in circulation was around $315 million.

The larger ramifications of demonetization took years to resolve. Individuals had repaid pre-war debts in devalued wartime currency and had incurred

new debts; property had been bought and sold, and the wartime currency had been used for a myriad of other transactions. In some cases there was duress, and it seemed deeply unfair to allow them to stand. However, it was equally clear that re-opening wartime transactions would not only have been extremely complex but also would have created injustices. Pending a decision on such matters, the BMA imposed a moratorium on all existing debts that remained in place until 1949. By that time a new post-war economy was in place, and ultimately most wartime transactions were allowed to stand.

Paul H Kratoska

See also Kratoska 1998.

Former Philippine leader arrested in Japan. José P. Laurel, president of the Japanese-sponsored Philippine Republic, is arrested by the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps in Japan along with other members of his cabinet. They are initially held in a Japanese prison in Yokohama and later transferred to Sugamo Prison in Tokyo. They will be returned to the Philippines in July 1946. Though charged with treason, Laurel will be freed as part of a general amnesty before the conclusion of his trial. He later returns to Philippine politics as a presidential candidate in 1949 and member of the senate from 1951.

President José P. Laurel is arrested and taken into custody at Osaka Airport.

Courtesy of U.S. National Archives

8 September

American forces arrive in Korea. Finally, after completion of initial U.S. troop movements to Japan and China, troops of the U.S. Army Forces in Korea land at Incheon. Their commander, Lt.-Gen. John Hodge, is faced with a delegation from the Committee for the Preparation for Korean Independence. Poorly briefed, not expecting the reception and having been specifically warned not to recognize any group claiming to represent the Koreans, Hodge declines to meet the delegation.

Lt.-Gen. Hodge watches the Incheon landings.

Americans in southern Korea

During the last days of World War II in August 1945, the U.S. officials in Washington planning the postwar world order were preoccupied with ensuring that Japan would become a U.S. ally and never again a threat. In their minds, Korea, a colonial dependency of Japan, was an afterthought as a policy priority. Washington apparently had little idea concerning Korea's future beyond an awareness of the wartime Allied agreement that the peninsula would become free from Japanese rule but subject to Allied occupation until the Koreans were judged capable of self-government. As a result, the officials could do no better than to entrust two colonels with the task of devising a formula acceptable to Moscow for the Allied military occupation of the peninsula. In this fashion, the 38th Parallel, a demarcation line that would divide the peninsula into two roughly equal-sized parts, was chosen and accepted by Washington and Moscow. The opinions of the Korean people were not consulted in this process.

Given this low priority afforded to Korea, the American occupation forces did not arrive there until 8 September, nearly a month after the Soviet arrival. Headed by Lieutenant-General John R. Hodge, the U.S. Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK) faced a daunting task of running the occupation regime, as Hodge lacked staff knowledgeable about Korea

Courtesy of U.S. Air Force

U.S. troops greeted by crowds after landing at Incheon.

and also initially lacked policy directives from both Washington and General Douglas MacArthur, his direct superior in Tokyo.

In U.S.-occupied southern Korea, groups of differing ideological and political orientations vied for leadership and legitimacy among the Korean masses they purported to represent. Some of these groups and leaders spent the bulk of the Japanese colonial years living inside Korea (such as Song Chinu, a right-wing nationalist, and Yŏ Unhyŏng, a moderate leftist), while others were in exile in the U.S. (such as Syngman Rhee, a right-wing nationalist), China (such as Kim Ku, a right-wing nationalist, and Kim Kyusik, a moderate rightist) and other places. Unfortunately for Korea, these Korean groups could not form a united front and U.S. policy did not recognize any of them as the legitimate government of Korea.

These groups were pushed further apart by the Allied agreement in Moscow in December 1945, which placed Korea under an Allied Trusteeship for a period of up to five years. Initially, almost all Korean groups opposed this decision. However, most leftist groups later changed their position, giving rise to a deepening discord between the right and the left, as violence among the Koreans escalated. It was in this context of increasing tensions in Korea and also globally in the rising Cold War that the U.S.–USSR Joint Commissions in Korea were convened in 1946–47 to carry out the Moscow trusteeship plan. A central element of the Commissions was the effort to form a left–right coalition of Korean leaders as the nucleus of a united Korean government. However, this effort failed, as the Americans and the Soviets could not agree on the composition of such a coalition and their occupation policies grew ever more divergent.

Jongsoo Lee

See also Lee 2006.

Vietnam plans for a national legislature. Within days of its establishment, the DRV provisional government agrees on procedures to establish a 300-member National People's Assembly. All Vietnamese citizens 18 years of age or older – men and women alike – will have the right to vote and stand for election, with the exception of individuals stripped of their citizenship rights or persons not of sound mind. One committee will formulate regulations for the first national election while another will draft a constitution for submission to the assembly.

Courtesy of Vietnam Historical Association

First Democratic Republic of Vietnam cabinet, September 1945. First row, left to right: Vo Nguyen Giap, Vu Dinh Hoe, Ho Chi Minh, Tran Huy Lieu, Nguyen Van To. Second row: Nguyen Manh Ha, Hoang Tich Tri (acting health minister), Vu Trong Khanh, Duong Duc Hien. Third row: Pham Van Dong, Hoang Minh Giam, Cu Huy Can.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 123664

Within a fortnight of the first RAPWI landing at Kemajoran airport near Jakarta, these Australian POWs at a nearby camp had been freed.

Thai negotiators sign truncated agreement with the British. Siam's representatives sign a four-point military agreement with the British at SEAC headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon. Even though Thai Regent Pridi Phanomyong had deemed it expedient to accept the more extensive British demands presented on 4 September, pressure from Washington via London forced Lord Louis Mountbatten to reduce the proposal to purely military matters.

First British troops in Jakarta. Weeks in advance of a full-scale landing by SEAC forces, a British reconnaissance force parachutes into the city. This is part of the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI) mission in Indonesia.

9 September

Japanese surrender in Seoul sparks outcry. In a formal ceremony at the Government Building in Seoul, General Hodge accepts the surrender of the Governor-General of Korea and Japanese military commanders. Ignorant of the earlier transfer of administrative power in the country (see p. 78), Hodge causes a popular outcry by instructing Japanese officials to remain in their posts for the meantime. The order is swiftly amended but does not recognize the status of the People's Republic, CPKI or people's councils; instead, an American military administration is initiated earlier than planned.

Courtesy of U.S. Navy

Surrender ceremonies in the Government Building at Keijo (Seoul), 9 September 1945.

From colonial elite to defeated national: the first 100 days

On 15 August 1945, Tanaka Masashi, a 30-year-old lecturer in public health at Keijō Imperial University in Seoul, found himself contemplating the fate of his nation. His postwar life followed a trajectory similar to that of many other Japanese colonial elites. Upon defeat, he fell from the top of the colonial hierarchy to a position near the bottom of a different world – the anxious object of Allied military occupation in territory formerly controlled by the Japanese state. Back in post-imperial Japan, after mandatory repatriation, he mourned the loss of his vibrant academic community and his separation from the place he considered home.

Tanaka's private diary, kept from July 1945 to February1946, provides a front-row seat to the collapse of the Japanese colony and the impact of the American arrival in Korea. It shows how the events of the first hundred days after the war, in Seoul at least, contributed to the abrupt transformation of East Asia from one of empires and colonies into one of nation-states.

After defeat, Tanaka evaluated and then promptly jettisoned the colonial project. In his years at the university,

as is evident in his diary and demonstrated by joint publications, he had worked closely with Korean colleagues and students. That did not prevent him from confronting the failure of the Japanese colonial state. On 8 September 1945, Tanaka reflected that, compared to the colonial policies of other empires around the world, Japanese rule was not cruel. Even so, noted Tanaka, Japanese rulers were neither adored nor respected. They had not gained the people's confidence, perhaps because they did not have enough national virtue to rule. Tanaka, for one, was willing to put colonialism in the past tense.

Defeat forced Tanaka to rethink who the Japanese were in the world. He began this process on the afternoon of 15 August 1945, after his neighbors and he, like people back in the home islands, had gathered around their radios to hear the emperor's radio broadcast of surrender. On that day, Tanaka wrote that the time had come for the Japanese to recast themselves, not as magnificent Japanese nationals (*daikokumin*), but rather as humble Japanese. He predicted that the process might take generations, but would ultimately succeed. During the months spent in post-colonial Seoul, he contemplated the question of the new position in the world of the Japanese, in his words 'a defeated people.'

The 8 September arrival of the Americans, in the form of Lieutenant General John Hodge's XXIV Corps, accelerated Tanaka's focus on himself as a Japanese national. Tanaka seemed to take comfort in describing, often with amusement, the Americans he encountered in Seoul – drunken soldiers, purposeful souvenir hunters, and the MP who, when tired of standing during his duty at an intersection in Seoul, sat on his helmet instead. The reorientation of the sex market, away from colonial elites like himself and towards the Americans, prompted a sober reflection on what it meant to be Japanese. On 29 September, Tanaka puzzled over why Japanese rather than Korean women appeared to be fraternizing with the Americans; did they, as Tanaka noted that others had suggested,

Courtesy of U.S. Navy

The Japanese flag is lowered at the General Government Building in Seoul.

have more prostitutional tendencies all along? In an encounter that shows how gender takes on new meaning in changing contexts, Tanaka's witnessing of 'his' 'nation's' women fraternizing with American soldiers raised his national consciousness in ways that he had not been forced to confront before.

As narrated in his diary, Tanaka left behind a world defined by Japanese–Korean colonial interaction and entered into one in which the American presence prompted more attention to his national identity. Tanaka's personal journey corresponded to wider changes, including the American impulse to match people to their appropriate nation-state. A person's citizenship subsequently came to trump all other affinities. The American-facilitated overlaying of the nation-state on extant colonial formations, as for example the one lived and recorded by Tanaka, resulted in the redefinition and transfer of millions of people throughout Asia and the establishment of authoritarian states. The first hundred days saw the unleashing of the national in the context of the colonial in ways that shaped Asia across the rest of the twentieth century.

Courtesy of Lori Watt

Pages from Tanaka Masashi's diary.

Lori Watt

See also Tanaka 1961.

Withdrawal of Japanese troops from Korea, 1945.

Mongol unification dream persists. Although they understand the implication of the Sino–Soviet Treaty is that the unification of Outer and Inner Mongolia is not acceptable, the leaders of eastern Inner Mongolia and members of the Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party do not want to give up hope. They send a letter to Choibalsan, expressing their wishes for unification with the MPR and ask him to pass on their request to Stalin. On the following day, similar letters are sent to the Soviet Army Headquarters.

Japanese formally surrender to China in Nanking. Okamura Yasuji, commander-in-chief of Japan's China Expeditionary Army, signs and presents the Japanese Instrument of Surrender to General Ho Yin-chin. Ho, on Chiang's behalf, orders Japanese armies to maintain order, keep control of arms and supplies, take care of POWs and assist KMT forces to retake Japanese-occupied territories in China.

General Ho Yin-chin inspects the Japanese surrender document.

Surrender in Nanking

The dominant narrative of Japan's surrender is well-known: from Potsdam to Hiroshima, Soviet advances, Nagasaki and the official surrender ceremony on board the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. This narrative of Allied power and Japanese capitulation stands in contrast to the experience of surrender and reconstruction throughout Asia. The Japanese army in China, known as the China Expeditionary Army (CEA), provides one such counternarrative. Much of the CEA remained in China for the better part of a year after surrender. Most of its troops were fully armed and frequently remained in charge of rail zones, cities, and even many towns in northern China.

Nanking was China's capital from 1927 to 1937, when it was occupied by Japan, and again from 1945 to 1949, when it was toppled by Mao Tse-tung. Between 1937 and 1945, Nanking was the seat of the wartime collaborationist regimes, which were disbanded on 16 August. In a second radio broadcast on 15 August, this one by Chiang Kai-shek, the Generalissimo made it clear that he wanted to pursue a benevolent policy vis à vis the Japanese: the Kuomintang would return 'virtue for malice'.

The CEA learned of the decision to surrender late in the evening of 15 August. Its Commander-in-Chief, General Okamura Yasuji, who commanded more than a million undefeated soldiers, opposed the decision. Nevertheless, the Emperor had ordered him to surrender and surrender he did. On 20 August, the CEA ordered all units to cooperate with the KMT in China's postwar reconstruction. At the same time, stern action was to be taken against any and all anti-Japanese actions by the communists.

After the inevitable negotiations, Gen. Ho Yin-chin, representing China, flew into Nanking on 8 September. The surrender ceremony took place at 9 o'clock (local time) the next day (the ninth hour of the ninth day of the ninth month, presumably according to Chinese wishes), in the auditorium of the Central Military Academy in Nanking. It has been reported that the Chinese wanted to use a round table and avoid humiliating the vanquished Japanese, but this idea was vetoed by the Americans. Okamura presented the Japanese Instrument of Surrender to Ho and thus brought Japan's disastrous eight-year invasion and occupation of China to an official end.

The present military situation in Eastern China must be quite unique. The Japanese Army of which I saw all too much … gave me the impression of being extremely tough and dangerous as, indeed, it has proved itself in battle. There is clearly no realisation of the extent of the disaster that Japan has suffered. It regards itself, with some reason, as an undefeated army which to its regret has been ordered by the Emperor to lay down its arms.

~ Maj.-Gen. Eric Hayes, official British observer at Nanking surrender

The ceremony was a solemn affair between men who knew one another. At least some of the Chinese victors respected and admired Japanese military figures such as Okamura; General Ho is said to have apologised to 'sensei' Okamura for subjecting him to the indignity of surrender. (In the post-war era, Ho travelled to Japan every year to celebrate Okamura's birthday.) This can be explained in part by old school ties: the major military academies in pre-1945 Asia were Japanese, and many on both sides of the conflict were products of these institutions. Chiang himself had studied at a Japanese military preparatory school. Ho was a 1916 graduate of the Imperial Japanese Army Academy, Okamura a 1904 graduate. Okamura had for some years been entrusted with the supervision of Chinese students at the Academy, and was clearly remembered with a great deal of gratitude.

The war ended suddenly, without the Japanese in China being defeated. Events took the KMT by surprise. The KMT military forces had borne the brunt of the fighting, suffering horrendous losses, and had been pushed far into the interior of China. Chiang needed time to move back into China's large urban centres. The Japanese were ordered to surrender only to the KMT and to remain in control until handovers were physically possible. Even after formal surrender, the CEA was asked to retain responsibility for maintaining public order in places such as Nanking, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The CEA was ordered to defend its positions, and did so, fighting against communist guerrillas and even retaking territory from the CCP (Chinese Communist Party).

Especially in northern China, the Japanese were in control of territories contested by the KMT, the communists, and even foreign

military forces. In Shansi in particular, the old warlord Yen Hsi-shan (who graduated from the Japanese Imperial Military Academy in 1909) actively recruited the local Japanese soldiers to fight against the communists. Although he described this recruitment as 'retained technicians on individual and voluntary basis,' most analysts interpret his actions as violations of the Potsdam Declaration and General Order No. 1. Nonetheless, Japanese soldiers were still fighting in Shansi in 1949.

To the astonishment of Western observers, armed Japanese soldiers were still patrolling Chinese cities. It is said that in post-surrender Shanghai, 'American servicemen respectfully stepped off the sidewalks to make way for armed Japanese patrols.' The first journalists to enter Nanking were puzzled: 'there is nothing in Nanking that indicates its liberation … Okamura is still enthroned in the Foreign Ministry Building, Japanese gendarmes still occupy the former premises of the Judicial Yuan. Japanese sentries are posted everywhere, with orders to maintain the peace and protect their compatriots.' Indeed, Chiang retained Okamura as a military adviser even during his 1948–49 war crimes trial, at which he was convicted, then pardoned and returned to Japan.

Perhaps because Chiang needed the Japanese, surrender was not followed by the ruthless brutality seen in Soviet-occupied Manchuria. Indeed, given the many complications that existed, it is surprising how smoothly the handover went. Both victors and vanquished behaved very well indeed.

David Askew

Chinese occupy northern Indochina. Finally, after a long delay, the main body of Chinese troops enters northern Indochina to disarm the Japanese and maintain order. It also proceeds to plunder the local populace or pay for supplies with Chinese currency at a highly inflated exchange rate. The commander of Chinese forces, General Lu Han, arrives in Hanoi by air on the 14th and establishes himself in the former governor-general's palace. Ho Chi Minh is swiftly summoned here. However, unlike the British, the Chinese are amenable to an accommodation with the Viet Minh.

General Lu Han

The Chinese Army in northern Vietnam

By prior Allied agreement at Potsdam, the China Theatre had operational jurisdiction over Indochina north of the 16th Parallel, and South East Asia Command south of that line. From 15 August this became the demarcation line for administering Japan's surrender. Two weeks later, Chinese units began crossing the frontier from Yunnan and Guangsi, accompanied by adherents of the Vietnam Nationalist Party and Vietnam Revolutionary League. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek aimed to reaffirm China's status as a victorious Allied power, use Haiphong or smaller ports to transport troops to northern China and Taiwan, and rid himself of the governor of Yunnan, Long Yun, by mounting a coup while Long Yun's better military units were away.

As Chinese soldiers entered the heavily populated Red River delta, mostly on foot, Vietnamese villagers were stunned by their emaciated bodies, tattered clothing and seeming lack of organization. Those few villagers who possessed a rice surplus took umbrage when Chinese quartermasters demanded to purchase it with alien currencies of dubious value. Stories soon circulated about clouds of flies hovering over Chinese troop columns and soldiers who dragged themselves along on limbs swollen by beriberi. Chinese troop numbers in northern Indochina probably peaked at about one hundred thousand by the end of 1945, then declined as units were dispatched elsewhere. Along with the soldiers came at least twenty thousand Chinese porters, camp followers and petty merchants.

General Lu Han, commander of Chinese forces, arrived in Hanoi by air on 14 September, going directly to the former governor-general's palace, from where his advance team had ejected French commissioner Jean Sainteny. Summoning Ho Chi Minh to the palace, Lu declared that one 'Chinese gold unit' (*guan jin*) would be worth one and a half Indochina piasters, a gross overvaluing of the Chinese currency. Fearful of Chinese swooping into local markets to buy up rice with these bank notes, Ho promised Lu that the DRV government would supply his troops with grain. Lu may have planned to impose Chinese military government, but now he was prepared to test Ho's assurances that the Vietnamese government could keep the peace. On 22 September, the day after General Gracey declared martial law in Saigon, Lu assured Ho that he had no intention of following the British precedent, so long as public order persisted in both Hanoi and the countryside.

Paris pushed hard for French colonial units interned in China to be re-equipped and allowed to re-enter Indochina, but this was opposed by Lu Han and postponed by Chiang Kai-shek until early the following year. Meanwhile, 4,500 colonial prisoners of war remained

under Japanese guard at the Hanoi citadel. Some Japanese units gave captured French weapons to Viet Minh groups rather than turn them over to the Chinese. In preparing the 28 September ceremony to take the Japanese surrender, Chinese organizers placed the French representative at number 106 on their guest list and ruled out any display of French flags, causing the French to boycott the proceedings.

The Chinese Army took over granaries, barracks, warehouses, school buildings, government offices and some French civilian dwellings. Entire platoons moved into upper-class Vietnamese residences. The Yunnan railway, French vessels, motor vehicles, distilleries and some printing presses were commandeered. Stocks of cloth, coal and salt were appropriated. Hanoi and Haiphong were the most sensitive occupation venues. Only three days after Lu Han and Ho Chi Minh reached their understanding, Chinese soldiers provoked a fracas that left two Vietnamese dead and ten badly injured. A plethora of neighbourhood-level altercations occurred in the early days of Chinese occupation of Haiphong. The city's Viet Minh paper urged citizens to stop saying or doing things 'not conducive to Sino–Vietnamese friendship'. Government censors made sure that no overtly anti-Chinese articles appeared.

Thousands of Chinese carpetbaggers took advantage of the military occupation to reap quick rewards at the expense of the long-suffering inhabitants. Some resident Chinese also linked up with the occupation authorities for mutual gain. Vietnamese objected when overseas Chinese draped Chinese national flags, rather than DRV flags, outside residences. However, Chinese-language newspapers in Haiphong and Hanoi vehemently condemned French atrocities in Cochinchina, even to the point of proposing reprisals against French nationals in the north. Ho Chi Minh made sure that the 10 October anniversary of the 1911 Revolution in China was observed prominently.

Chinese army occupation of northern Indochina was traumatic for many people, and it was a relief to see the last unit depart in September 1946. Yet the Chinese troop presence had prevented the French Army from taking aggressive action against the DRV north of the 16th Parallel. The DRV government, nascent National Guard and Viet Minh mass organizations took advantage of this breathing space, which helps to explain why the French Army on return did not succeed in quelling resistance.

David Marr

French repulsed in central Laos. Free French forces attempt to take Savannakhet, but they are pushed back by the Lao Issara Army with Viet Minh support. Days later, Ho Chi Minh contacts Phetsarath directly to offer fuller Vietnamese support.

10 September

Inner Mongolian republic declared. At a people's congress convened in Sunid and attended by representatives from the Mongolian People's Republic, a provisional government of the 'People's Republic of South Mongolia' is established. An organic law for the new republic is passed five days later and, on the 16th, MPR leader Choibalsan pays a personal visit to honour the new government.

Right: MPR leader Khorloogiin Choibalsan

and for unspeakable brutalities in the field and prison camps.

of both the military and civil codes.

Liberation Forces Speed Towards Kuala Lumpur

Australian Associated Press

KANDY Tues.—British and Indian troops who landed on the west coast of Malaya yesterday are pushing inland rapidly towards Kuala Lumpur, capital of the Federated Malay States.

THE troops landed in the Port Swettenham and Port Dickson areas, but so far they have made no contact with the Japanese.

Meanwhile, in Kuala Lumpur, stocky, scowling Japanese guards, with fixed bayonets, are trying to keep back hysterical, cheering crowds of Indo-Chinese and Malayans.

"It is a hopeless struggle, however," says a correspondent in Kuala Lumpur. "It is obvious that nothing is going to stop the citizens celebrating the Allied victory.

"The Japs still control the city and their staff officers roll round in glittering high-powered cars. Soldiers still chivvy pedestrians towards the gutters with their rifle butts and the inhabitants are impatient to see them go."

"The Japanese are taking advantage of every days delay to indulge in a last-minute orgy of destruction. They are building great bonfires with looted cloth and useless Jap currency, and are tipping all the rice they cannot take away into rivers and crocodile swamps.

"The southern quarter rubber plantations have been worked throughout the occupation, but the rest either have been destroyed or allowed to run to seed. Mile after mile is clogged and over-run by the jungle."

PALE BESIDE
CK DRAGON
Associated Press

From *The Mercury* (Hobart, Tasmania), Wednesday 12 September 1945

Position of Japanese in Indonesia uncertain. President Sukarno formally declares an end to Japanese authority in Indonesia but high Japanese officials state they will surrender to the Allies, not to the new Republic. On the ground, the situation varies from place to place. In the Javanese hinterland, the Japanese choose to withdraw from certain urban areas. Some Japanese units are also actively arming local Indonesians, whereas others are neutral or even hostile to the Republicans and continue to follow instructions to maintain order until British forces arrive.

British push for Kuala Lumpur. Now that Singapore has been secured, British forces begin advancing up the Malay Peninsula toward Kuala Lumpur. Crowds there are already celebrating their imminent liberation. Japanese forces in the city will formally surrender on the 13th.

11 September

Moves against Japanese war criminals. Occupation authorities in Japan designate 39 former Japanese leaders as war criminals and order their arrests. Among their number is General Tōjō Hideki, who as prime minister presided over Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Tōjō has already attempted suicide before being taken to prison. He is later found guilty at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and hanged in December 1948. Eventually 5,700 Japanese military personnel will be tried in war crimes tribunals throughout Asia.

Immediately after his suicide attempt, Tōjō Hideki receiving life-saving treatment at SCAP Hospital in Tokyo, 8 September 1945.

The French Permanent Military Tribunal in Saigon (1945–50)

As with its Allied counterparts, the French conducted their own war crimes investigations in their sphere of influence, namely Indochina. The work of investigating and putting on trial so-called B- and C-grade war criminals was conducted by the Permanent Military Tribunal at Saigon, eventually leaving to the Tokyo Trials prosecution of A-grade war criminals. Altogether, the Saigon Trials conducted from 1946 to 1950 involved 39 separate trials in which a total of 239 defendants were indicted. Of these, 46 were acquitted, 63 were sentenced to death and 130 others were found guilty; most of the latter group remained in prison in Vietnam until repatriation processes began in 1950.

The Lang Son Massacre. For reasons of French prestige and military honour, undoubtedly the most important case to go before the Saigon Tribunal was that of the Lang Son massacre. On the evening of 9 March 1945, the Japanese invited French military officials to a banquet. On this occasion, at Lang Son, the Japanese commanding officer, Col. Shimizu, arrested all French invitees at the same time that Japanese military units were launching surprise attacks against French military positions across Indochina. During the following three days,

600 French prisoners fell into Japanese hands. Half of these would be massacred in cold blood. Four Japanese officers would be condemned to death for their role in this event, which, along with the Thakek (Laos) and similar operations relating to military units, was interpreted as an assault upon the French state. As such, these cases were highlighted by the French prosecution at the Tokyo Trials.

Case of the 49 Saigon Kempeitai. Another case of note from the Saigon Trials (case no. 19) involved the actions of 49 members of the Saigon gendarmerie (Kempeitai) who, beginning on 3 March 1945, arrested, interned, and interrogated some 200 French soldiers and several Vietnamese civilians, of whom at least 60 were subjected to torture. Victims were variously subjected to baton blows, burns, water torture, forced swallowing of boiling tea, and so on. Other methods involved food and water deprivation, threats against family members, and appalling internment conditions including lack of hygiene and medical care, overcrowding, and the prevalence of infectious diseases. Tried 'jointly' on war crimes charges, 13 of the accused (including four in absentia) received the death penalty, 27 received prison sentences of varying lengths (including seven to solitary confinement) and nine were acquitted.

The Cholon Massacre. Ethnic Chinese were also victims of Japanese atrocities in Indochina and their cases were investigated by French war crimes investigators, with the knowledge of local Chinese consular officials. The case of the October 1944 execution by sword of 15 Chinese by the Saigon-Cholon kempeitei bears scrutiny, especially as the bodies were exhumed and several of the perpetrators were apprehended.

French War Crimes Investigations in China. More generally, the French were displeased with the low priority placed by the Nationalist Chinese forces in apprehending Japanese war criminals north of the 16th Parallel in Indochina. It appears that many escaped justice, either by drifting into the Viet Minh camp or melting across the border into China or Burma. In a case cited by Piccigallo (1979: 206), the Chinese authorities did cooperate with the French. In this instance, in January 1948, a Shanghai military tribunal transferred to local French authorities for trial in Indochina one 'notorious' war criminal deemed responsible for a long list of tortures and murders committed during his time in Indochina as well as in Java

Compared with other Allied trials of Japanese, the French relied more regularly upon mass trials, as with the *kempeitai* cases. Even so, the French also fell in line with Allied legal principle of command responsibility. That is, superior officers were regarded, at a minimum, as accomplices to crimes committed by those under their command.

~ Philip R. Piccigallo, The Japanese on Trial: Allied War Crimes Operations in the East, 1945–1951.

War ends in British Borneo. A day after the official surrender on Labuan of Japanese troops in British North Borneo, Australian troops enter Kuching, capital of Sarawak. Later that day they liberate Batu Lintang, a large camp for POWs and civilian internees on the edge of Kuching. The Australian 9th Division now takes effective control of North Borneo and Sarawak and establishes a military administration.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, OG3496

Aust. War Memorial, P03303.005

Japanese surrender on Borneo. Above: Lt.-Gen. Baba Masao, Japanese commander in Borneo, arriving for the surrender ceremony. Below: The aircraft on which Baba arrived, all military insignia defaced.

and other southern areas.

Repatriations and Finale. Even after the Tokyo Trial procedure terminated, the Saigon Tribunal process continued. The final executions of members of the Japanese Imperial Army condemned by the Saigon Military Tribunal occurred on 11 May 1950. Pending a final official repatriation of condemned Japanese war criminals conducted in early 1950, the French Permanent Military Tribunal in Saigon wound down its affairs, having terminated its investigations. Under a presidential decree of 26 May 1953, category B and C criminals tried under French military tribunals were entitled to claim remission. It was hoped that such 'gracious' measures would be rewarded with bonds of friendship between France and Japan and their peoples.

Geoffrey C. Gunn

See also Piccigallo 1979.

Guerrillas may occupy Malayan territory. Around this time the SEAC finally gives the MPAJA formal permission to occupy and maintain order in areas no longer under Japanese control. The guerrillas have already been doing so of their own volition since receiving word of the Japanese surrender.

Huge crowds support Indonesian *merdeka*. Barely a week after a Republican administration was proclaimed in the city, a massive pro-independence rally is held in Surabaya. A second mass demonstration follows on the 17th. Such popular expressions of support for *merdeka* (freedom) are echoed across the country.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 129037

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 116974

Above: A section of the Allied cemetery at Lintang camp. Left: Allied POWs at the Batu Lintang prison camp waving frantically at a low-flying RAAF Catalina aircraft. Leaflets were dropped on 15 August announcing the surrender.

Looking for Din after the war

Ivor H.N. Evans started looking for his friend, Din bin Brahim, as soon as he could think about life after the war. Evans was a British anthropologist and archaeologist whose work from the 1910s on the indigenous peoples of Malaya and Borneo was hugely influential. Din was cook, guide and friend to Evans after they met in Malaya in 1919. Before Evans was interned in May 1942, he packed the manuscript of his autobiography, photograph negatives and cinema film and told Din to hide them. After the war, Evans' first priority was finding Din and recovering his material, though this proved to be difficult due to the slow re-establishment of communication within British Borneo.

Evans was first interned in Jesselton but was moved several times, eventually arriving at Batu Lintang Camp, Kuching, where he remained until the war's end. The camp was a POW and civilian internment camp holding British, Australian and Dutch POWs, as well as civilian European men, women and children and priests. Evans, like most other internees, suffered from disease due to limited and poor-quality food. The internees had a small death-rate overall – unlike the POWs who died in greater numbers for want of food and overwork. Evans writes in his unpublished autobiography that, when Australian doctors arrived at the camp on 8 September, 'the more than six hundred graves were eloquent, though silent, witnesses against the Japanese administration.' The camp was formally liberated by Australian troops on 11 September.

Din's fortunes during the war were quite different from Evans'. He and his wife, a woman from Labuan, were in Kota Belud but hurried to Labuan upon

hearing of an anti-Japanese uprising. He gave Evans' materials to a Chinese man who was to send them to his Dusun wife's village. Yet the materials were still in Kota Belud when it was bombed; the man's wife was killed and everything Evans left to Din destroyed. In Labuan, Din and his wife built a small house and planted hill rice. Soon they attracted unwanted attention from Salong, the headman of a nearby village, who sent Din's name to the Japanese authorities with the recommendation that he be made village policeman. Din and his wife fled Labuan and stayed in Sapong Estate near Tenom, where he operated machines for the Taiwan Company.

The Allied assault on Borneo began in May 1945 and organized Japanese resistance had ended by late July. Around the time of the surrender, Din and his wife were living in Tenom, where they had bought a house and some land. They supported themselves by running a coffee stall and trading molasses made from cane they grew themselves. They were in Tenom when they heard that Evans was looking for them.

On 14 September, Evans arrived at a military hospital in Labuan where the majority of the former internees were taken and where Lady Mountbatten later came to visit. While in hospital, he asked the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit and the British North Borneo Civil Service if they could locate Din. He was informed that the last they knew of Din was that he had left Kota Belud in 1942. In less than a month, Evans was moved to a convalescence camp. He then occupied a small house on Labuan after he successfully wrestled permission from the post-war authorities to stay in Borneo instead of being shipped back to England.

Meanwhile, Din travelled to Beaufort where he twice applied unsuccessfully for a pass to Labuan. Eventually, Din hired a local boat in Weston to take him to Labuan and was permitted to land without any difficulty. On 28 November 1945, Din rejoined Evans, who wrote that he looked skinny but in good health. Din's wife was brought over some weeks later. She was very upset at having been left by Din for some weeks, calling Din a *binatang* (beast).

In Evans' first postwar academic book, his 1953 ethnography of Tempasuk Dasuns in North Borneo, the dedication reads: 'To Din bin Brahim, companion of my travels for more than thirty years, whose care of me has made this work possible.' The friendship between them spanned the history of Malaya and British North Borneo from the height of British control, to war and eventually decolonization.

Sandra Khor Manickam

This vignette is largely based on Evans' unpublished autobiography, 'The Years Behind Me' (Evans 1948), available at the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. See also Ooi 2011, Evans 1953.

12 September

Japanese forces in Burma surrender. The remnants of the once-vast Japanese forces in Burma formally surrender to the Allies; about 70,000 troops are taken prisoner. Since the disastrous failure of the main Japanese army in July to break out of Burma, its few survivors together with other detachments (including units of the Indian National Army – see p. 119) have struggled to retreat east into Thailand or south into Malaya. Many have been killed by Karen irregulars.

Chris Turner, Interservices PR Dir., India, RIK/780

The Japanese surrender in Burma took time. Japan's 33rd Army only surrendered to the 17 Indian Division at Thaton, north of Moulmein, in late October.

Malayan resistance declared non-operational. While its troops may remain intact and under British command until disarmament terms are negotiated, SEAC declares that the MPAJA is no longer operational after 12 September. Reprisals and executions of collaborators before this date are seen as 'military exigencies' but they will not be tolerated after this date. Henceforth, a number of guerrillas are arrested for extra-judicial killings.

Japan's Southern Expeditionary Army surrenders. The formal surrender of Japanese forces in Southeast Asia to Lord Mountbatten, head of the Allied South East Asia Command, takes place at Singapore's City Hall. With their commander, Field Marshal Terauchi Hisaichi, unable to attend for health reasons, the Japanese are represented by General Itagaki Seishirō, commander of the 7th Area Army based in Singapore.

Chris Turner, courtesy Interservices PR Directorate, India, c/1942

Left: Lord Mountbatten talking to released Indian POWs during a tour of prison camps at Singapore in September 1945.

13 September

British forces arrive in southern Indochina. Preceded by small advance parties a week earlier, Major-General Douglas Gracey lands at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport and immediately orders the Administrative Committee ejected from the former governor-general's palace. A contingent of Indian and Gurkha troops accompany Gracey, while the main body of 20th British Indian Division troops under his command follow by sea. They are tasked to oversee the Japanese surrender below the 16th Parallel, locate and evacuate Allied POWs, and maintain law and order. It is unclear whether the latter remit includes the restoration of French control, especially as Gracey's brief is limited to a few areas outside of Saigon and Phnom Penh. Next day, Gracey talks at length with French commissioner Jean Cédile but refuses to meet Vietnamese of any political persuasion. Viet Minh plans based on a special relationship with the Allies are suddenly in doubt.

Inner Mongols' three-front diplomacy. Apart from promoting unification with the Mongolian People's Republic, the Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party skilfully negotiates with communists and nationalists in northeast China. Party members are allowed be members of the CCP and KMT as long as they keep their original party principles. The party convenes its second general congress and decides to set up an eastern Inner Mongolian provisional government that would replace the Hsingan provincial government and have a higher level of autonomy than the latter.

A Japanese soldier pastes up the first proclamation issued by General Gracey, printed in French, English and Vietnamese.

Chris Turner, courtesy of the Interservices PR Directorate, India, item AR/1184

14 September

Trotskyists purged in Vietnam. Widely condemned for being too friendly to the British and stung by Gracey's attitude, the Viet Minh leadership in Saigon moves against their most vocal critics, the Trotskyists. Police forces surround a high-level meeting of the International Communist League, whose attendees surrender without violence despite being well-armed. Some are subsequently executed, with many more hunted down in the following weeks. Within a year the Viet Minh will have eradicated the country's once thriving Trotskyist movement. These are not the first killings of Trotskyists. A few weeks earlier, Vietnam's most gifted Trotskyist writer and orator, Ta Thu Thau, was seized and executed by a local Viet Minh group when returning home to Saigon from Hanoi.

15 September

Laos heading towards denouement. At the invitation of Prince Boun Oum of Champassak, French troops enter Pakse, the main centre in the southern British zone; several weeks will pass before their hold here is secure. The same day, Prince Phetsarath reiterates his proclamation of Laotian independence and announces the integration of all the country's provinces (including Champassak). About this time, he also detaches Lao government services from the rest of Indochina and establishes a new currency and tax regime. Two days later, King Sisavangvong rejects these measures. He is well aware that, despite their early setback in Savannakhet, Franco–Lao forces are making their way up the middle Mekong.

British force nears Jakarta. A week after an advance party lands in Jakarta, a British naval squadron arrives at the city's Tanjung Priok roadstead. On board are RAPWI control staff whose urgent task is to coordinate the rescue and repatriation of POWs and internees. A group of NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs) officials is also on board, led by Ch. O. van der Plas, the former Governor of East Java. Local Japanese commanders, including Admiral Maeda who has played a key role in launching the Indonesian revolution (see p. 109), immediately present themselves and formally surrender.

16 September

Rival Korean party established. A new rightist party is formed in response to General Hodge's hostility to claims by the Korean People's Republic to be Korea's legitimate government. Founded by conservative elements, including a group of landlords and businessmen, and led by Song Chinu as party president, the new Korean Democratic Party denounces the KPR as a communist organization.

Photo courtesy of David Marr

Inaugurating `Gold Week' in front of the Hanoi Opera House. From the cover of the first issue of *Thoi Moi* magazine, September 1945.

'Gold Week' launched in Hanoi. Addressing a lack of funds and the need to pay off the Chinese occupation forces, the Viet Minh launches a nationwide fundraising campaign, during which tables are set up in public venues to receive donations of jewellery, gold leaf and other precious items from patriotic citizens. Gold week actually lasts two weeks, with Supreme Advisor Vinh Thuy (Bao Dai) presiding over the closing ceremony. At the Hanoi inauguration ceremony, Ho Chi Minh pledges to give to the highest donor a gold medal he has received from overseas Vietnamese admirers. To the crowd he also presents Brig.-Gen. Philip Gallagher, head of the U.S. Military Advisory and Assistance Group attached to Gen. Lu Han's command, and the next day's papers feature Gallagher's participation. Gallagher has just arrived in Hanoi, one of his principal responsibilities being to coordinate the loading of tens of thousands of Chinese troops on U.S. ships bound for Manchuria or Taiwan.

17 September

CCP invited into Inner Mongolia. Mao Tse-tung is informed by the Soviets that Soviet–MPR forces are ready to withdraw from Inner Mongolia. In violation of the Sino–Soviet friendship treaty signed with the Nationalist government a month earlier, the CCP is invited to take control over part of the region.

Ethnic violence in Sumatra. Fighting breaks out between Indonesians and local Chinese in Medan and Pematang Siantar, in part due to increased local fears of a Dutch return and the wait-and-see attitude of many Chinese.

Free Thai leader becomes Thai premier. Seni Pramoj, former Minister to Washington and leader of the Free Thai movement abroad, formally takes office as Thailand's Prime Minister. Regent Pridi Phanomyong, hoping to capitalize on his reputation as a staunch supporter of the Allied cause, has chosen Seni to head the cabinet despite his royalist background.

18 September

Truman states Korean independence will take time. Although he celebrates the surrender of the Japanese forces in Seoul, saying this 'heralds the liberation of a freedom-loving and heroic people', the U.S. president adds that the assumption by the Koreans themselves of the responsibilities and functions of a free nation and the elimination of all vestiges of Japanese control 'will of necessity require time and patience'.

Rescue and repatriation of internees begins in Indonesia. A RAPWI (Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees) team is dropped on Magelang in Central Java (see map, p. 283). The despatch of thousands of internees from camps in the region to Surabaya follows. Similar operations are carried out in Sumatra.

19 September

Kim Il-sung returns to Korea. Once a guerrilla fighter with Chinese communists in Manchuria and now a major in the Red Army, North Korea's future leader arrives home, landing at the east coast port of Wonsan. The Soviets are dissatisfied with the current leadership of Korea's communist party and suspicious of Cho Mansik, the powerful Christian conservative in their midst. Kim is thus an alternative future leader worth considering.

Chinese Communist strategy unveiled. The CCP central committee releases its strategic directive, which emphasizes its intention to 'develop into the north and defend against the south' (see p. 185). In so doing, it hopes to deter southern Nationalist forces from advancing northwards and for the CCP to take sole control of Jehol, Chahar and Manchuria.

British assert control over Saigon. Having already ordered the occupation of key positions in Saigon, including the governor-general's palace from which the Southern Provisional Administrative Committee is expelled, General Gracey now declares martial law and forbids the printing of all newspapers. He is strengthened in this move after a meeting with Field Marshal Terauchi days earlier secured a Japanese commitment not to take sides but to obey British orders instead. As well as generally sidelining the Viet Minh, the British free all French internees and permit French 'instigators' to stage a show of strength. Unable to respond militarily, the Administrative Committee escalates its earlier anti-French sanctions into a general strike, calling on everyone to refuse to collaborate with the French in any way, whether militarily, administratively or economically.

Japanese deserters in Vietnam

At the official Japanese surrender ceremony in Saigon on 30 September, Field Marshal Terauchi Hisaichi agreed that Japanese troops would be responsible for law and order in southern Indochina until Allied troops took over. Nonetheless, as many as 10,000 rank-and-file soldiers quickly chose a different strategy, namely desertion. Many shared their military expertise with the Viet Minh and Pathet Lao, thus making a direct connection between the way World War II ended and the general history of subsequent Indochinese revolutionary movements.

A range of 'psychological' reasons for desertion were established by French in-

telligence. First, a majority headed for the bush because they were ignorant of the fate that awaited them, just as their Viet Minh sponsors kept them in the dark as to the possibility of repatriation. Second, certain officers and grades went over to the Viet Minh side for political reasons, including sympathy for the pro-independence cause. Third, certain nationalist elements joined the Viet Minh ranks in the belief that they could achieve their Greater East Asia dreams. Fourth, some joined the ranks of the Cao Dai, owing to supposed similarities with Shinto. Fifth, some were disoriented by the Imperial rescript under which the Emperor repudiated the myth of his divinity. Sixth, war criminals were conscious of their fate should they fall into the hands of the French authorities. Seventh, others more or less cognizant of conditions back home in Japan, preferred to wait out their time in Vietnam. Added to that, some were seduced by Viet Minh propaganda calling for Japanese military specialists to help wage the anti-white war. Geography, namely the location of Burma or China, offered an escape route for others.

While numerically insignificant alongside the mass Viet Minh membership (with an initial 1,000 deserters in southern Vietnam and several thousand more scattered throughout Indochina), their contribution was clear. Their role as military instructors, especially regarding guerrilla combat, was acknowledged, as was the creation of *Tokkohan* (special assault sections), and 'suicide volunteers.' Japanese officers were especially active in Nguyen Binh district of Cao Bang province, commanding the Viet Minh 7th zone. As Christopher Goscha (2002) has highlighted, individual Japanese sympathizers to the anti-French cause offered technical assistance to the Viet Minh, with some building light weapons and munitions factories and others lending their expertise as radio operators. In general, all the Japanese serving with the Viet Minh adopted a Vietnamese name with the title Tan Viet Nam (New Vietnamese).

As of 20 April 1946, an estimated 49,000 Japanese deserters/dissidents remained in Tonkin (northern Vietnam). Three thousand of these crossed over to Hainan Island (China) clandestinely while the rest scattered throughout northern Vietnam. The lion's share of these (30,500) moved to the port of Haiphong and the rest spread out to a number of obscure locations, including Thai Nguyen (300); Phuc Yen (Vinh Phuc, 200), Hoa Binh (3,000), Dong Thieu (Thanh Hoa, 3,000) and Hanoi (500). An additional 3,000 remained in Annam (central Vietnam), and an equal number are known to have relocated to Laos, some into leadership positions. One example is Col. Yamane Yoshito (contacted by the author in Vientiane in 1980–81), who rose to a high rank within the Pathet Lao movement before defecting to the Royal Lao Army in 1950.

Geoffrey C. Gunn

See also Goscha 2002, Gunn and Gunn 1984.

Bloodbath averted in Jakarta. Determined to push the Republican cabinet into fully separating itself from the Japanese authorities, who still largely control the city and are now treating with the British, radical *pemuda* call a mass pro-independence rally in Jakarta's Ikada Square in the government's name. They take this action in defiance of Japanese orders and despite the opposition of Sukarno and Hatta, who threaten to resign. With Japanese machine-gunners ringing the square, Sukarno takes the stage and makes a brief public speech appealing to the 200,000-strong crowd to disperse. He succeeds. Involved in events but not appearing in public is the communist leader, Tan Malaka.

Bloody 'flag incident' in Surabaya. The arrival of a RAPWI team in Surabaya to prepare for the arrival of released internees from Central Java causes local disquiet. When a group of freed Dutch internees with Japanese support then raise the Dutch tricolour outside a central hotel, an angry local crowd attacks them and kills their Dutch leader. The blue stripe is torn from the tricolour, changing it into the red and white Republican flag.

Pro-independence youths seize the Dutch tricolour flying over the Orange Hotel in Surabaya and turn it into the red and white Indonesian independence flag.

Power changes hands in Surabaya

Early Saturday night, 18 August, people had just finished their evening prayers and broken the day's fast when news of the declaration of Indonesian independence aired over the kampung loudspeakers of Japan Occupation Radio. The Radio's young Indonesian office workers had taken a first step towards revolution by disobeying their Japanese overseer and broadcasting the news. For the city's kampung residents, the end had come to forty months of Japanese rule, felt most acutely along the streets and in the alleyways through the faceslaps and threats of its military police, the Kempeitai. By Sunday, the end to this punitive justice seemed in sight as the red and white flag replaced the rising sun atop the municipal police building at the junction of Cohen and Darmo Boulevards. On Monday, the Indonesian police on duty in the building took custody of the approximately fifty firearms stored in the armoury at the back. On Tuesday, their Indonesian head, Muhammad Yasin, followed the lead set

the day before by Resident Sudirman; he formally declared his support for independence.

The flag above police headquarters flew proudly, greeting Peta soldiers entering Surabaya from their barracks to the south of the city after their Japanese commander followed Allied orders and disarmed and disbanded them by Wednesday. These soldiers entered a city where street lights shone and markets buzzed with people after three years of wartime blackout and curfew had come to an end, and where red and white flags adorned pedicabs and street-stalls and the carefully-chalked word, *merdeka*, stretched across walls in defiance of the Kempeitai.

These symbols of national sovereignty echoed the transfer of power underway by Tuesday and Wednesday, when Japanese managers surrendered the electricity station, a hospital, the housing authority and factories over to their Indonesian workers. At the same time, educated Indonesian administrators formed the foundations of government by establishing the Surabaya branch of the KNI (Komite Nasional Indonesia, or Indonesian National Committee), and former Peta soldiers and other auxiliary forces formed the foundations of an army by establishing the BKR (People's Security Organization). To support the KNI and the BKR, Surabaya's educated young middle class men formed the PRI, mustering the support of the city's half-million kampung residents.

In less than a week, power had changed from Japanese to Indonesian hands in almost all areas except along the street, where Kempeitai guards remained at their posts in accordance with Allied instructions that they maintain order until the pending arrival of a peacekeeping force of British-Indian soldiers. The despised Kempeitai now wore white bands on their right upper sleeves that read 'Allied Forces Police', reinforcing the suspicion that they were protecting Dutch interests in the city. These suspicions were further reinforced by 6 September as the first of several thousand Dutch and Eurasians began settling in the city after their release from internment camps elsewhere in Java. The Kempeitai stood guard as former internees reoccupied the European garden suburbs, pulled down independence posters, flew the Dutch flag and fought Indonesians who stood in their way.

These tensions culminated in the famous 'flag incident' of 19 September, when a group of Dutch and Eurasian young men entered the Orange Hotel – where British and Dutch RAPWI (Recovery of Allied Prisoner of War and Internees) officers and Japanese guards were stationed – and raised the Dutch flag on the rooftop flagpole. An angry crowd rushed to the scene, burst inside and attacked the Dutch and Eurasian protagonists, while others climbed the flagpole and tore off the flag's blue strip, leaving the Republican red and white.

Robbie Peters

20 September

Violence erupts in the Chinese community in Bangkok. Tensions between the Thai authorities and Chinese nationalists, apparent since the end of the war in August (see p. 88), flare into gunfights with police and looting of shops in the Chinese district in Bangkok. The incidents lead to a general strike by Chinese merchants and the deaths of more than 30 people over the next few weeks.

21 September

Cambodia claims part of Cochinchina. Although Cambodia has recognized the newly established Democratic Republic of Vietnam since its inception and allowed it to open a mission in Phnom Penh, a more formal anti-French agreement is now mooted between the two countries. However, talks between Cambodian premier Son Ngoc Thanh and representatives from Saigon's Southern Provisional Administrative Committee quickly break down. The reason is Thanh's unexpected demand that the Cochinchinese provinces of Tra Vinh and Soc Trang, which have high concentrations of Khmer, be ceded to Cambodia. (Thanh himself is a Khmer Krom from the region.) Demands for annexation or at least greater autonomy have also been aired across the lower Mekong delta in recent weeks by local Khmer. Tension is high and sometimes flares into violence between Khmer and Vietnamese communities in both Cochinchina and Cambodia.

Australians welcomed in Eastern Indonesia. Australian troops occupy Makassar as they fan out across Eastern Indonesia and accept the surrender of Japanese forces. Ambon follows next day while Kupang and Banjarmasin were liberated the previous week. Generally the Australians are warmly welcomed, the Dutch NICA officials who accompany them sometimes less so. In Makassar, attempts to bypass the Republican governor and organize pro-Dutch militias quickly lead to violence.

Colonialism returns to East Indonesia

The diversities of East Indonesia would have been difficult for Indonesian nationalism to overcome in any scenario. The war appeared to widen the gap, since Borneo and all the islands to the east of Java were administered by the Japanese Navy (*Kaigun*), whereas Java and Sumatra were administered by two separate Japanese armies. The *Kaigun* had understood from the outset that its zone constituted 'sparsely populated primitive areas' to be permanently retained by Japan, with no thought of political mobilization let alone independence. It also became in 1944–45 a front line of the war, as the Allies fought their way back along a northern route from West Papua to Morotai to Tarakan and Balikpapan in Borneo. There were 125,000 Japanese troops in the Navy area at the surrender, ruling about a fifth of the population that 50,000 Japanese controlled in Java.

Only the desperate military situation convinced Tokyo in June 1945 that the nationalists should be given some reason to defend this region against the Allied counterattack. The veteran (Christian) Menadonese politician Dr 'Sam' Ratulangie was then allowed to organize a nationalist mass movement in the *Kaigun*'s capital at Makassar. Only in South Sulawesi did it have any real following, largely because influential Bugis rulers (*raja*) supported him and opposed the Dutch return. In the days before the surrender the Japanese managed to fly Ratulangie and three supporters to Jakarta for the PPKI meeting, where he had no success arguing for a more federal Republic. He was appointed Governor of Sulawesi, and flown back there by the Japanese, whereas the Jakarta-based politicians appointed governors of Borneo and the Moluccas never made it to their posts. A Balinese Governor of the Lesser Sundas made his way overland to Bali. Only in Bali and South Sulawesi was there effective resistance to the Dutch return.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 110432

Australian troops advancing through burning buildings and oil wells at Balikpapan, Borneo, July 1945

Douglas MacArthur, U.S. commander of the Southwest Pacific, wanted to focus on the Philippines and Japan itself, and transferred the task of occupying Indonesia to Mountbatten's British Southeast Asia Command on 15 August. Mountbatten delegated Borneo and East Indonesia to the Australians, already established in Balikpapan. When their ships reached key cities between 11 and 22 September, the Japanese cooperated fully and most Indonesians welcomed the end of war's hardships and the return of the pre-war order. Australians dis-

armed the Japanese and passed administrative responsibilities to the Dutch smoothly in most areas in December 1945. Many Australian ordinary soldiers resented what they saw as Dutch colonial arrogance, while a few who were members of the Australian Communist Party actively promoted the Indonesian independence cause. After a couple of Australians were killed or injured by hot-headed youth, however, their mood hardened. Only in South Sulawesi did Australia face the dilemma confronting the British in Java and Sumatra, whether to deal with a Republican administration or to take power forcibly from it.

Australian troops landed in Makassar on 21 September together with some Dutch Civil Affairs (NICA) officers who set about mobilizing pro-Dutch militias. The commander of Makassar Force, Brig.-Gen. Ivan Dougherty, confined some undisciplined pro-Dutch units to barracks after they had provoked violence in the city but he declined to meet Ratulangie until virtually forced to do so by other Indonesian actors. The policy of Ratulangie and the *raja*s who supported him, to accept Australian authority but not Dutch, became impossible as both Dutch and Republican forces became mobilized. Major violence erupted on 29 October, after which the new commander, Brigadier Frederick Chilton, set Ratulangie a three-week 'test' of whether he could control the young fighters. This failed, and in November Chilton backed the Dutch officials fully, arrested the most militant *raja*s, and in effect forced the resistance to lie low until Australian troops pulled out on 2 February 1946.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 120862

Australian troops enter Makassar, watched by locals.

Violence broke out as soon as the Australians were gone, and South Sulawesi remained a troubled province with a high degree of lawlessness until 1965. Elsewhere in Borneo and the East, however, a Dutch administration was able to re-establish itself swiftly with the cooperation of Christian minorities and most *raja*s. East Indonesia became the main laboratory for Dutch attempts to evolve gradually to self-government through complex federal arrangements. Nevertheless, the elected representatives of East Indonesian federal states supported Republican rather than Dutch positions in the conflicts of 1948–49. Federalism was destroyed by the victorious Republic in 1950 and has not again been attempted.

Anthony Reid

23 September

French coup in Saigon. His control slipping in both the city and countryside, General Gracey surreptitiously re-arms French POWs, urged on by French commissioner Jean Cédile. In the evening, with British agreement, these troops stage what effectively is a coup, seizing the Town Hall, where they raise the tricolour, and unseating the Viet Minh from many other buildings. The head of the Administrative Committee and several of his soldiers are taken prisoner. When the French run amok, violently assaulting Vietnamese civilians, Gracey tries to rein them in, but their actions have already irretrievably inflamed tensions in the south.

Courtesy of David Marr

French forces assert control in Saigon.

Leftists rally in Manila. The Democratic Alliance, a post-war people's political party, stages a large rally in Manila against collaborators in the government, as well as demanding various reforms and the release of Luis Taruc, the Huk leader. Peasants, labourers and others, including Huks and some communists, attend the rally. They march on to the Presidential Palace to press their demands.

Vietnamese Catholics call for Papal intervention. Catholics join non-Catholics in northern and central Vietnam in demonstrations protesting British actions in Saigon. A message in the name of all four Vietnamese bishops is sent to Pope Pius XII, requesting his benediction and prayers for Vietnam's independence.

Chinese assert control in Laos. Soon after they enter Luang Prabang (and within days also Thakhek, Savannakhet and Vientiane), Chinese forces disarm the French in the royal capital but leave Prince Phetsarath as head of government. This tilts the balance of power back in the viceroy's favour. As in northern Vietnam, the Chinese are regarded as a pest but their forces do hinder a French return above the 16th Parallel.

24 September

Mayhem and misery in Saigon. Apparently retaliating against the French coup the day before, during the night an unknown group of Vietnamese attacks the cité Hérault, a mixed quarter in Saigon home to many Eurasian families but its population swollen with an influx of French families. About 300 people including women and children are taken hostage. Perhaps 100 are killed and many more are injured, raped or tortured. Eurasians are key victims. The Viet Minh are blamed for the attack though more likely candidates are Binh Xuyen gangsters or Cao Dai followers. Gracey is also sharply critical of the failure of Japanese troops to intervene. In response, British and French forces, aided by the Japanese, clamp down hard on the city. The situation is exacerbated by severe water and power shortages due to the general strike. By early October, the core of Saigon is a ghost town. The incoming French high commissioner, Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, later dates the beginning of the Indochinese War to this day.

Courtesy of David Marr

French civilian satisfaction with the coup of the 23rd quickly turned to horror and outrage two days later when news spread of the overnight killings at the cité Hérault.

Saigon descends into chaos

On 2 September 1945, after a series of earlier demonstrations, Vietnamese seized power in Saigon under the leadership of the Southern Provisional Administrative Committee. While this event is usually celebrated as a 'revolution' of a unified people, the reality is more complicated. Saigon soon devolved into chaos for three reasons: Vietnamese political rivalries, the actions of rogue gangs, and the effects of British and French intervention. Much of the chaos ended in early October 1945, when most Vietnamese evacuated the core of Saigon, but the legacy of these divisions profoundly affected the First Indochina War that followed.

In the lead up to the August uprisings, the Indochinese Communist Party and the Vanguard Youth tried to organize a Southern Provisional Administrative Committee to bring on board selected groups and to seize power. Unlike in the north, however, the communists lacked the influence or power to coerce their rivals and control Saigon and its sister city of Cholon. Far from being ideologically cohesive and disciplined, the movement relied on loosely linked and poorly trained volunteer groups and militias, some of them rivals, that often acted on their own. This was a potential recipe for disaster.

After Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender to the Allies on 15 August, a series of demonstrations occurred in Saigon. On 21 August, a coalition of groups (including the Cao Dai, Trotskyists, Hoa Hao, and Vanguard Youth, but not the Stalinist communists) formed a National United Front and launched a demonstration. However, showing the fluidity of allegiances, some of the same participants joined with the communist-led Southern Provisional Administrative Committee in subsequent actions. Preparations culminated in a large demonstration on 25 August followed by one on 2 September in which 300,000 to a million took part. For a brief moment, it seemed that all Vietnamese were united in opposition to the return of French rule.

This temporary unity was quickly tested. Violence marred the end of the 2 September demonstrations. In the weeks to come, no centralized authority exerted strong control over the movement. The Japanese military, by far the strongest armed force, elected to stay out of the fray as much as possible while fulfilling its surrender duties of protecting its former prisoners of war. To consolidate their power, the groups associated with the communist-led Administrative Committee assassinated and imprisoned opponents. Mobs attacked foreigners, including French, Dutch prisoners of war, Chinese and Indians. In September, hotheads increasingly took matters into their own hands, pushed by incendiary rhetoric to 'wipe out traitors.' As the socialist Thieu Son lamented, 'bullets killed many individuals unjustly.'

When British troops arrived as an Allied occupation force in mid-September,

the situation began to unravel further. The central market and the port went up in flames. General Gracey, head of the British occupation forces, armed the woefully undisciplined French soldiers who had been interned as prisoners of war. Angry about earlier violence against French, they went on rampages on 23 September, attacking Vietnamese, burning down houses, and generally terrorizing the population. Realizing his mistake, Gracey reined them in, but the damage was done.

On the night of 24–25 September, a Vietnamese group (whose identity has never been definitively established) retaliated, methodically carrying out the massacre at the cité Hérault, a mixed quarter in Saigon. Many of the European and Eurasian civilians seized, including women and children but especially the Eurasian *métis*, were mutilated, tortured, beaten, raped and killed. While a Vietnamese witness, Phạm Duy, estimated 200 dead and another 100 abducted, the probability is that fewer than 100 French and Eurasians were killed that night in Saigon. British and French forces, aided by Japanese, clamped down hard.

By early October, the core of Saigon was a ghost town. Almost all the Vietnamese, under orders from the Southern Provisional Administrative Committee, had fled to rural areas. But the divisions that marked events in Saigon were simply exported to rural areas, and shaped the war that would follow.

Shawn McHale

See also Krull 1946.

The cité Hérault massacre of 24–25 September 1945

Dubbed the Cité Hérault Massacre of September 24–25, after the French-Eurasian quarter of Saigon of that name, a Vietnamese mob eluding Japanese guards began attacking European houses. Shouting 'Death to the Europeans', some 300 men, women and children were taken hostage. The men were killed or tortured, and mutilated. Around half the hostages survived, mostly women and children, but they too had been abused and mutilated. With Japanese guards standing aside, Gurkha units reached the scene an hour later. Some accounts suggest that 100-plus French simply 'disappeared.'

Candidates canvassed by the British for the massacre included the Trotskyists (unlikely given their strictly political goals), the Binh Xuyen gangsters (more likely given their proclivity to violence), Cao Dai (strong candidates as they were also worked over by the Japanese), or the Viet Minh (not consistent with their political goals). The French (and victim survivors and supporter groups) blamed the Viet Minh. But neither were the Japanese exonerated. Much responsibility for the disorder and inaction of Japanese troops in keeping order fell upon Field Marshal Terauchi. Following the cité Hérault massacre, the Allied Commander of Land Forces in Indochina, Maj.-Gen. Douglas Gracey, severely reprimanded Japanese commander Terauchi Hisaichi and threatened him with 'prosecution as a war criminal' if he did

not rein in his forces.

The following day, 25 September, saw a range of Viet Minh armed actions around the city. The Vietnamese launched passive resistance, imposed boycotts and raised roadblocks in the suburbs. They also seized electric power facilities, the slaughterhouse and the central market, which was burnt. The British recaptured the power plant and American personnel guarded the Palace Continental Hotel. The atrocities took place in an atmosphere where a number of French civilians were being abducted. But the racial dimension of this outrage – a Japanese card – should not be ignored.

According to a French account, following the March 9 *coup de force*, Japan sequestered 20,000 French and other Europeans in Saigon, including those in the Continental Palace Hotel. The cité Hérault district, home to a large number of Eurasian families, was included in this order (representing one-sixtieth part of the total). Measuring 250 m. on one side and lodged between the Vietnamese-populated districts of Dakeo and Tan Dinh, the four streets making up the quarter were lined by small *compartements* or villas. During the Japanese occupation the population had swollen with an influx of French families. The French and *métis* included lower-level bureaucrats, junior officers, or working for business firms. One or two were well-to-do. Relations with neighbouring Vietnamese, mostly employed and middle class, reportedly were always 'good.' As the report signaled, 25 September 1945 was a 'day of infamy standing out even in the bloody history of 1945–46.'

Not subject to war crimes investigations, which focused upon Japanese perpetrators, relatives of the victims struggled for years with the French government to facilitate an official inquiry into the brutal killings and to pay compensation. A petition sent on 3 March 1947 by the 'Association of Families of Victims of the Massacre of September 24–25, 1945 in Saigon' to Marius Moutet, French Minister for Overseas France, named Col. H.J. Cédile, senior French officer in Saigon, as the responsible person (presumably for failing to act to protect the victims). In no uncertain terms, however, the French blamed the Viet Minh for the massacre; this view can be read out of archival documentation relating to the event. The massacre became a major sticking point in negotiations between the French and the Saigon-based Viet Minh, contributing to a complete breakdown.

It is true that over the longer timeframe, the cité Hérault massacre has receded – even disappeared – in memory, just as the actual quarter has long been lost in Saigon's urban redevelopment. Yet, at the time, the event deeply affected French attitudes and may have called down a harder military approach to handling the nationalists, just as the southern Viet Minh vacated the city to launch a 30-year struggle from the countryside.

Geoffrey C. Gunn

See also Neville 2007.

25 September

Free Thai soldiers celebrate 'victory' in Bangkok. Members of the pro-Allied Free Thai underground lead a 'Victory Parade' through the heart of the Thai capital in an effort to further associate Thailand with the Allies. The British boycott the event. American officers are ordered not to march but watch the parade from near the reviewing stand.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 117374

Despite the political and ethnic tensions in Bangkok, many freed Allied POWs took the time to explore the city before being repatriated home. Here, after their long imprisonment by the Japanese, two Australians found the local children irresistible.

Indochina's Indian dimension

Europeans and Eurasians were the targets of Vietnamese reprisals once the French *coup de force* of 23 September restored colonial control over Indochina, but so too were its long-term Indian residents. Six Indians were reported killed and a further seventy disappeared during the wave of violence which swept Saigon on 24 and 25 September 1945. Nor were Vietnamese objections to the French return the sole politics at play. Events in Saigon in those few short days in late September 1945 were shaped by Indian nationalist questions as well as Vietnamese ones.

Among the Indians who disappeared was Antoine Ratinassamy. A Hanoi policeman, he was one among many men in Indochina's municipal police forces and its colonial army who originated from France's possessions in India. Descended from three generations of loyal Indian *Indochinois*, he was a French citizen like his forebears, and had attended Hanoi's prestigious *Lycée Albert Sarraut*. He was also Tonkin-born and fluent in Vietnamese. On leave in Saigon in civilian dress, he was seized by the Viet Minh on the outskirts of Saigon on the afternoon of 25 September.

Saigon's resident Indians later told a Government of India representative that the use of British Indian troops and the employment of Indians in French police

and army forces turned the Vietnamese against them. There were grounds for their convictions. Britain was widely criticized for placing its 20th Indian Division under General Gracey to oversee the Japanese surrender in Southern Vietnam. Nehru was by then an Indian leader with global influence; he and other Indian nationalists publicly condemned the use of colonial troops to suppress nationalist movements. In their internal correspondence, Southeast Asia Command Chief Mountbatten and India's Viceroy Wavell fretted over the risks of the same. Soldiers from France's possessions on the subcontinent had a long history of engagement in the colonial army in Indochina; during the *coup de force*, some of them were seen forcibly removing Viet Minh representatives from their seat of government in the south.

Like other migrant communities across Southeast Asia, overseas Indians were ambivalent towards nationalist movements in the places which hosted them. Antoine Ratinassamy's story cannot be explained solely on the grounds of Vietnamese aggression. The known facts of Ratinassamy's disappearance, compiled by his father, rely on information from escapees, political activists, and a network of Indian merchants stretched from Hanoi through Saigon to Bangkok. They provide no satisfying answers, but offer an honest account of ambiguous political allegiances in times of tension and uncertainty.

Reproduced with the kind permission of his nephew, Maurice Sinnas

Antoine Ratinassamy

In one view, Ratinassamy's allegiances appear to have lain firmly with the French. When first seized, he posed as a 'Bombay' merchant, for fear his captors would do him more harm if he identified himself as a French police officer. He helped other Indians and Eurasians to escape, and tried himself to escape several times. When Ratinassamy encountered Vietnamese classmates from his French *lycée* who had joined the Viet Minh, he consented to work with them; but this, his father reasoned, was 'mostly to save his life'.

Yet there are as many indications that he did not want to be saved. A Cambodian nationalist saw him at the home of the head of the Viet Minh in Bang-

Aung San stakes his future on political success. Though saying he is sad to leave the military, Aung San rejects the British offer to become Deputy Inspector-General in the regular Burma Army. He declares his departure from the army and now aims to lead the AFPFL as a civilian in its struggle for Burmese independence.

Court to try Filipino collaborators established. The People's Court bill to handle cases against collaborationists is signed into law by President Osmeña. The law hampers the prosecution by imposing strict rules of evidence and places a six-month limitation to file all cases.

kok. Indian merchants passing through spotted him at several public places in that city, always in Viet Minh company. A final annotation to his father's summary, penned in late 1948, pinned Ratinassamy's location to the provinces of central Vietnam but did not suggest he was being held against his will.

There is no evidence that Antoine Ratinassamy was connected with the Indian National Army. Since the Japanese surrender, a number of Indians working for Subhas Chandra Bose's cause remained under arrest in Saigon. This group included local residents and leading members of his government-in-exile. In mid-September 1945, Viet Minh leaders made use of INA detainees to help them produce crude leaflets targeted at Gracey's Indian soldiers. 'Why do you shed blood for the colonisers?' these handbills cried in efforts to stir anti-colonial sympathies. Gracey's private papers show it was the subversive cooperation between the Viet Minh and the INA which convinced him to hasten the French return to power.

Members of Vietnam's remaining Indo–Vietnamese community began to profess more clear-cut political commitments than Antoine Ratinassamy's. Mahamas Bibi, the young daughter of an Indian textile merchant, met her Vietnamese teacher every morning at a Viet Minh base outside of Saigon. She would bring with her food, medicines, clothes and notebooks stolen from her father's stores, and carried secret documents back from the base to Saigon. Only later did she come to understand the political importance of her actions. Moritam, from a family of Indian dairymen, was an active teenage participant in local Saigonese militia attacks against the Japanese. He went on to follow the militia when they accepted Viet Minh leadership. While Bibi describes herself as a 'child of the revolution' and Moritam rose to the position of a high communist official, Ratinassamy's position remained more ambiguous. In the end, his family were never sure if he stayed with the Viet Minh out of fear or choice. Their only certainty was that he never came back.

Natasha Pairaudeau and Chi P. Pham

The emergence of Aung San as a civilian politician

Just after the Japanese surrender, Burmese political parties and resistance leaders met at Rangoon's Naythuyain Theatre Hall on 16–19 August 1945 (see p. 85). Standing up before the massed body was thirty-year-old Aung San, leader of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) and Commander of the Patriotic Burma Forces (PBF). He had done much since he turned twenty and he had done it quickly, moving from student strike organiser in 1936 to organiser of the Thirty Comrades and then to the head of the Burma National Army (later PBF). Aung San appealed for unity regardless of political stripe or ethnicity and now, in 1945, he presented himself as the leader of the nation.

In September 1945, Aung San carried Burma's national cause to Kandy on the shoulders of his ill-fitting fatigues (see p. 188). Kandy was the HQ of the Supreme Allied Commander of the South East Asia Command, Lord Louis Mountbatten. Aung San had been invited to a conference to discuss the military and administrative relationships between the British and citizens of Burma in the near future. Dorman-Smith had in fact been privately critical of colonial rule in Burma before the war and had observed that, after over a century of rule, the lives of rural Burmese had barely changed. He now had his chance to begin to set things right again, although he would find that a poor post-war financial climate would not afford him the resources to do it.

Aung San's first task was to win respect, for himself and other Burmese, from colonial and military authorities who were not used to treating the Burmese as equals. Mountbatten liked the feisty general, but his general staff did not and they refused to call Aung San and his officers by their PBF ranks. Aung San told his associates that the PBF would hold onto their arms and even go to war now with the British if the negotiations broke down. Mountbatten interceded and ordered his officers to change their behaviour. Aung San then negotiated the absorption of the PBF into the colonial Burma Army.

When they parted on very warm terms, Mountbatten advised Aung San that he had to choose whether to be a soldier or a politician, as one could not be both. Although Aung San was offered the post of Burmese Deputy Inspector-General of the Burma Army, he refused on the basis of a majority decision of his delegation. Aung San would have preferred, he wrote to Mountbatten, a permanent career in the military, but he had a national cause to lead.

Michael Charney

Aung San's story continues on p. 285. See also Maung Maung 1962, 1967; Paline 1977; Silverstein 1993.

26 September

U.S. Marines land in China. Although advance parties of American forces have been in China for weeks, at last the main contingent of U.S. troops enters the country and is greeted by huge crowds in Tientsin.

Controversial OSS officer killed. The ongoing presence of an OSS team in Saigon angers the head of the British occupation forces, General Gracey, but there are personal differences between Gracey and OSS mission head Peter Dewey as well. One of Gracey's first actions after arriving in Saigon is to demand that Dewey end all contacts with Viet Minh adherents. When Dewey evades the ban by having his subordinates continue the contacts, he is declared persona non grata and ordered to leave the country. On his way to the airport, possibly mistaken for a Frenchman, Dewey is shot dead in a Viet Minh ambush. His body is never recovered. In a letter to President Truman, Ho Chi Minh makes it clear he disapproves of the killing and expresses his condolences and friendship with the American people.

27 September

Emperor meets MacArthur. In the first of ten such visits, Emperor Hirohito makes a formal visit to the U.S. embassy in Tokyo and is received there by General MacArthur. At one of these meetings the Emperor raises the issue of him being charged for war crimes. In the event, MacArthur decides that Hirohito should not be charged, a decision heavily criticized by some.

Emperor Hirohito and General MacArthur at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo

Courtesy of Tropenmuseum

28 September

British limit the scope of Indonesian occupation. Mindful of Japanese briefings on the local situation and hearing news from RAPWI teams of growing disorder, especially on Java, Mountbatten seeks to soften the Anglo–Dutch agreement. The British occupation forces about to land will be confined to 'key areas' rather than fanning out across Java and Sumatra. There is an uproar next day when the incoming commander of British forces, General Philip Christison, publicly states their priorities will be to secure the Japanese surrender, repatriate POWs and internees, and maintain law and order. Outside the key areas, the Japanese should maintain order until local authorities take over. When he adds 'the British have no intention of meddling in Indonesian affairs', he implies a de facto British recognition of the new Republic.

Political tensions in the Philippines. With the failure of President Osmeña's attempt to create a dialogue between landlords and peasants, the political situation worsens. In the following month, Central Luzon will be the site of political flare-ups as the newly formed Democratic Alliance tries to organize meetings among peasants. Government forces in armoured cars represent the interests of the landlords and keep a close watch. Permits to rally are denied and arrests made. American military policemen assist the Filipino MPs, thus showing U.S. support for the existing social order. Pro-government publicists allege a communist plot to overthrow the government.

General Philip Christison

President Sergio Osmeña

投降

29 September

Chinese newspaper demands Thai surrender. The day's issue of *Ta Kung Pao*, a major newspaper based in Chungking, carries an editorial demanding that Thailand officially surrender and that the Thai government arrest wartime collaborators and place them on trial as war criminals. Despite ongoing Sino–Thai tensions, the Seni Pramoj government eventually signs a Treaty of Amity with the Republic of China in January 1946.

日本投降矣！
答覆四國接受規定條款
今晨七時四國首都同時正式宣布
日本各投係昨晚提出
昨日來京

The 15 August edition of the newspaper *Ta Kung Pao*, proclaiming 'Japan surrendered, hurrah!' Founded in 1902 in Tientsin, *Ta Kung Pao* grew to be an influential and popular newspaper, not least because of its sharp political commentary – especially regarding the Japanese. With the Jap¬anese invasion, its staff fled to establish local editions in Shanghai, Hankow, Hong Kong and other cities, but these were abandoned as those cities fell. The Chungking edition survived in China's wartime capital and a Shanghai edition was re-established in November 1945, followed by a Hong Kong edition in 1948.

30 September

CCP forces withdraw from Hong Kong. After brief clashes between KMT and CCP forces in Kowloon and the New Territories, the communists withdraw after a British request. Fighting continues along the Sino–British border and inside Guangdong province, however. The British Military Administration notes continued KMT and CCP propaganda activities in the colony, with the Nationalists denouncing continued British rule. Both parties remain active during subsequent decades and are responsible for major riots in 1956 and 1967.

British forces enter Jakarta. The main body of British troops finally arrives outside Jakarta. It includes a detachment of Seaforth Highlanders, a regiment coincidentally involved in Britain's first occupation of Java in 1811. Most troops are Gurkhas or Indians; Indian independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru voices a protest the same day about their inclusion in the occupation forces. On entering the city, the troops are soon involved in combating looting, arson and rioting. Four rioters being killed in the first two days. Within a week, the first soldier has been killed.

Left: Japanese patrolling the streets of Jakarta just days before the British arrival. Continued Japanese involvement in maintaining law and order throughout the region proved necessary long after their surrender.

Vietnamese nationalists fail to win Chinese support. A large delegation from the anti-communist Revolutionary League meets with General Xiao Wen to discuss suppression of the communists and removal of the DRV provisional government. Xiao Wen may be sympathetic but he cannot act contrary to the wishes of General Lu Han, who two weeks earlier reached an understanding with Ho Chi Minh.

France adds Emerald Buddha to its demands. During the ongoing Thai–British negotiations in Kandy, French representative Pierre Clarac presents Prince Wiwatthanachai with a note for the Thai Regent. This demands that the Thai government accept a return to the pre-June 1940 state of relations (including reversion to prewar frontiers) and restoration of the Emerald Buddha to its 19th-century home in Vientiane.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 118804

1 October

Soviets announce pull-out from Manchuria. The Soviet ambassador to China reports that the Soviet withdrawal from Manchuria will start immediately and be completed by the end of November. China's Foreign Ministry replies that a Nationalist army ferried by a U.S. fleet will land at Dairen around 10 October.

Photo: Yevgeny Khaldei

Sino–U.S. plans to ferry Chinese government troops to Manchuria do not take Soviet power and ambitions into account (see p. 268).

Separatist move by Mongols in China's north-east. The Hulunbuir region declares itself an autonomous province. Five days later its leader writes to Choibalsan expressing their desire for union with the MPR.

Karen propose a different future for Burma. A range of Karen groups begin a three-day mass meeting in Rangoon to discuss a 'humble memorial' that proposes a separate Karen state within the British Commonwealth, to be federated with Burma at a later date. Fears are also aired that the culture and identity of Burma's ethnic minorities are threatened. Mindful of the savage repression that Karen suffered during wartime resistance to the Japanese occupation and its puppet Burman regime, Karen want to retain their licensed weapons. While prepared to work with the returning British governor, they feel neglected by the British despite their long-term loyalty. This gathering foreshadows the unproductive London meeting in 1946 and the Karen uprising in 1949.

A key Karen leader after the war, Saw Ba U Gyi was part of the 'Goodwill Mission' that travelled to London in 1946 with high hopes of securing Karen independence but returned with nothing. The first president of the Karen National Union on its formation in 1947, he was killed in 1950 during the Karen revolt.

Striving for their own country

Not everyone was swept up in the nationalist fervour inflaming much of Asia in 1945. Indigenous minorities were especially ambivalent in their responses. For them, 'national liberation' could mean exchanging an often privileged (but subservient) autonomy under the colonial order for citizenship of an independent 'nation' dominated by the ethnic majority and its culture.

Few minorities acted as if self-determination could also be for them. The Karen people of Burma were an exception, however, and in 1945 they began a struggle for self-determination that later shook the foundations of newly independent Burma and triggered what proved to be the world's longest civil war.

The Karen saw themselves as one of Burma's original people, arriving there long before the majority Burmans. Sometimes treated harshly under the ancient Burmese monarchy, many Karen gave military aid to the British during their annexation of Burma and later in the suppression of anti-colonial rebellions. Especially from 1922, they (like many ethnic minorities) enjoyed relative autonomy and were disproportionately represented in the colonial army and police. Along with other ethnic minorities like the Kachin, Chin and Naga, they rallied to the Allied cause following the Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942 and installation of a puppet Burmese state. Many Karen were subsequently killed or displaced by the Japanese and their allies, the Burmese nationalist army led by Aung San. Karen levies were instrumental in defeating the Japanese, played a major role during the British advance on Rangoon and after that killed a large number of Japanese soldiers trying to pull out of Burma in July 1945.

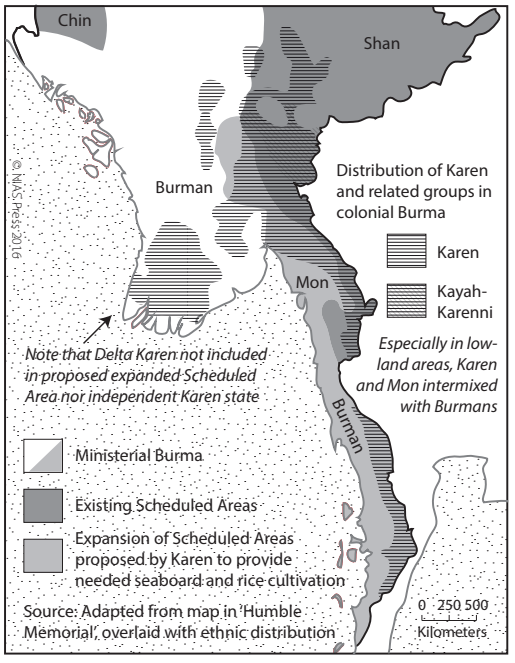
In the meantime, Aung San's army had changed sides and now his Burman-dominated Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League claimed the fruits of victory. From the fall of Rangoon onwards, it was the AFPFL's vision of a united, independent Burma that was foremost in discussions. Hence, while Karen organizations stood under the AFPFL umbrella – indeed a future Karen leader took part in the crucial AFPFL meeting in August (see p. 85) and attended the Kandy conference in September (p. 188) – Karen voices were rarely listened to in the general nationalist clamour (or, if heard, not responded to).

Their experiences during the war and now afterwards thus united the Karen in a feeling of being victims of Burman domination and aggression. In a mass meeting held in June–July, Karen nationalists worried that the culture and identity of Burma's ethnic minorities were threatened unless the colonial government intervened and secured some kind of autonomy and protection. However, with the great defender of the Empire, Winston Churchill, losing the British general election in July and the new Labour government apparently favourable to 'handing over Burma', the Karen

would need to look after themselves.

A second mass meeting, held in Rangoon on 1–3 October, aimed to address these concerns. Though initiated by the umbrella Karen Central Organization, attendees were from the Christian-led Karen National Association, the (Buddhist) Burma Karen National Association and the newly formed socialist Karen Youth Organization. Apart from their organizational differences, attendees reflected the huge diversity and geographical dispersal of the Karen people – from Rangoon and the Irrawaddy delta in the west to the mountainous border regions in the east and south. Internal differences were to dog this conference and other Karen attempts to secure their future.

On 26 September, before the meeting, a 'Humble Memorial of the Karens of Burma to His Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Burma' was published. This outlined a future Karen state covering a huge area, not only much of the eastern part of Burma south of the Shan States but also adjacent districts in Thailand from Chiang Mai to Mae Sot where many Karen lived. Called the United Frontier Karen State, it was envisaged this Karen state would be administered by the Karen under a British governor and be a member of the British Commonwealth. The memorial had no objections to an independent Burma, however; in due course the Karen state might even join a federation of Burma. The idea of a federation thus existed long before the famous Panglong meetings in 1946–47.


Chin
Shan
Burman
Distribution of Karen and related groups in colonial Burma
Karen
Kayah-Karenni
Mon
Burman
Especially in low-land areas, Karen and Mon intermixed with Burmans
Note that Delta Karen not included in proposed expanded Scheduled Area nor independent Karen state
Ministerial Burma
Existing Scheduled Areas
Expansion of Scheduled Areas proposed by Karen to provide needed seaboard and rice cultivation
Source: Adapted from map in 'Humble Memorial', overlaid with ethnic distribution
0 250 500
Kilometers
© NIAS Press 2016
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The ethnic complexity of an independent Karen state

The memorial caused consternation among the British and Burmans (also the Mon, whose core area was enclosed in the proposal). The British considered its claims for a state to be 'absurd'. They also noticed that the delta Karen – the most advanced – were surprisingly not included in the proposal. In response, the meeting appointed a four-man deputation to argue for the memorial in London. The decision split the KCO, however, being opposed by the BKNA and KYO who wanted to negotiate with the AFPFL. Here were the roots of the split in 1947–48 when the younger, militant Karen leaders boycotted elections and prepared the Karen 'revolution' while a 'union' group opted for a state within independent Burma.

Mikael Gravers

Indonesian leaders safeguard revolution. Despite General Christison's de facto recognition of the new Republic, Sukarno and Hatta are concerned as SEAC troops begin imposing order in Jakarta. Their concerns are hardly lessened by the arrival from wartime exile in Australia of H.J. van Mook, the Lt. Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies. They thus sign a political testament transferring state power to veteran communist leader Tan Malaka in case they lose their ability to function as President and Vice President.

Tan Malaka

The Dutch return

In late September 1945, leaving Brisbane for Batavia, Lieutenant Governor-General H.J. Van Mook boasted to his members of government in exile, 'I will bring you Sukarno in a cage'. Much to his dismay, Van Mook arrived in a chaotic and shaggy Batavia. The capital was being knocked about by gangsters and revolutionaries. Sackings, killings and kidnappings were daily routine. Red-white flags had been put out everywhere. Slogans chalked on walls and trams augured ill for the colony and for the lieutenant governor-general: 'No more Dutch treat', 'For the right of self-determination' and 'Van Mook. Whatcha doin' here'.

Van Mook had not expected, not even in his most melancholy moods, that his return from exile would take place under such bad circumstances. Bad the circumstances were and boasted he had indeed, but Van Mook was a pragmatic and creative ruler. With 'some show of force', food supplies, constructive labour and generosity towards collaborators, Van Mook was convinced that good governance could save the day.

With his troops, Admiral Lord Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander Southeast Asia Command, would help Van Mook on his mission. At least, that is what Van Mook and Mountbatten had agreed upon in a Civil Affairs Agreement in August 1945. In the meantime, however, intelligence had reached Mountbatten that Indonesian nationalism had developed into a powerful movement and Japanese forces had raised well-armed Indonesian troops. Mountbatten thus embarked on a new course. Fearing bloody battles with the Indonesian army, he refused to sacrifice his soldiers to restore Dutch colonial rule. However, Mountbatten was prepared to send more troops to Indonesia to rescue the estimated

150,000 Dutch internees, provided that the Dutch started negotiations with the Indonesian leaders. Van Mook protested strongly against this but he was completely dependent on the British forces and thus had to bow to the inevitable. Van Mook commissioned his advisor Abdulkadir Widjojoatmodjo to contact the Republicans.

On 31 October, without consulting the Dutch government, Van Mook opened talks in Batavia with the Indonesian leaders. Among those present was Sukarno, 'since otherwise', Van Mook explained, 'we could not even make a start'. Although they distrusted Van Mook's intentions, the Indonesian leaders expressed their willingness to cooperate. In his report to Johann Logemann, his Minister of Overseas Territories in The Hague, Van Mook warned that it would be dangerous to underestimate the power of Indonesian nationalism or how far it had spread. Indeed, only a few days before, 4,000 well-armed Indian troops who had arrived in Surabaya to escort internees to safety had met with vehement opposition during which their commander, General Mallaby, was killed (see p. 279).

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 010635

H.J. Van Mook

Although the Indonesian leaders and Van Mook had agreed to keep their talks under wraps, the news got out that Van Mook and Sukarno had met. Back in the Netherlands, the Council of Ministers immediately was called into an emergency meeting on 1 November. The Council disclaimed all responsibility for Van Mook's approach. After the meeting, Logemann telegraphed Van Mook that the Dutch government held its ground and that he had to break off contact 'with that Sukarno person'. On the very same day, Prime Minister Schermerhorn and Minister Logemann flew to London where Queen Wilhelmina was temporarily staying. They requested her permission to dismiss Van Mook. Wilhelmina, however, refused their request. She did not doubt Van Mook had committed a serious mistake, but stated 'it would be improper to change supreme commanders in the heat of battle'.

And so the resolute queen saved the recalcitrant Lieutenant Governor-General. On 17 November, Van Mook was thus able to start talks on good governance with the newly appointed, first prime minister of the Indonesian Republic, Sutan Sjahrir.

Tom van den Berge

2 October

Japanese hand over power in Surabaya and Yogyakarta. While formally surrendering to the first official Allied representative to arrive in the city, a Dutch naval captain, the senior Japanese commander in Surabaya supports the Republicans. He thus orders his forces to hand over their remaining weapons to the Indonesians. Five days later, Japanese forces in Yogyakarta surrender to local Republican authorities.

Only some Japanese units handed over their weapons to local nationalist groups. Most obeyed the order to await the arrival of legitimate Allied representatives and to surrender to them. Even when weapons were handed over to locals, often these were (say) Dutch arms captured in 1942, not Japanese weapons. The issue here for many Japanese troops was that weapons stamped with the imperial chrysanthemum symbol were the Emperor's personal property and could not be given away. This issue may have been a cause of the battle between *pemuda* and the Japanese garrison at Semarang two weeks later (see p. 260). Above: close-up of a Japanese rifle with chrysanthemum symbol stamped on it.

Financial issues in the Philippines. The Philippine Congress is poised to pass a government budget that includes back pay to its members from the time they were elected (November 1941), even though they did not serve during the war years. The public is disgusted with the selfish act. On the same day, D.L. Ballantyne of Chase Bank arrives in Manila as Special Bank Advisor to President Osmeña. He establishes a devaluation schedule for the Japanese occupation notes widely known as 'Mickey Mouse' money.

Courtesy of the National Numismatic Collection, National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution

Mickey Mouse money – 1,000-peso notes issues by Japan between 1942 and 1945.

3 October

Soviets tighten control over northern Korea. Foreshadowing similar U.S. moves in the south to exercise greater control over local people's committees, General Terentii Shtykov, supreme commander of Soviet occupation forces in northern Korea, establishes a Soviet Civil Administration headed by one of his generals. This initiates the formation five days later of a shadow Korean administration, the Five-Province Administrative Bureau under the leadership of Cho Mansik. On the 12th, Shtykov issues an order dissolving all indigenous security organizations including the volunteer police. All weapons are to be surrendered to the Soviet authorities. The effect is to disarm any potential non-communist dissidents.

Collaboration trials begin in Manila. The first case is filed in the People's Court: *People of the Philippines vs Teofilo Sison*. Sison served as a member of the Laurel administration's cabinet and was appointed Inspector-General of Martial Law in September 1944. He is charged with forced labour recruitment, anti-American speeches and the implementation of martial law. The trial will end with a guilty verdict in March 1946. Sison is the only high-level government official who will be found guilty; all others will be either acquitted or freed in a general amnesty.

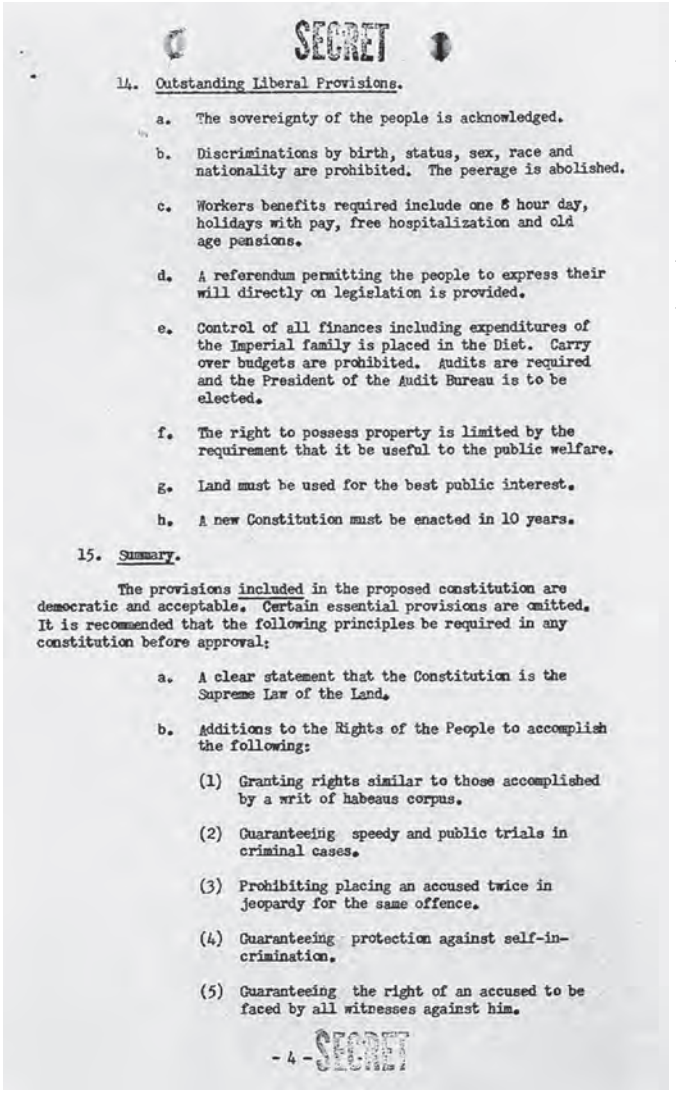
French forces arrive in Indochina. After a long voyage, the main body of SEAC forces docks at Saigon's harbour. Included are the first contingents of the French Expeditionary Corps, about 1,000 men in total. Two days later, General Philippe Leclerc, the 'liberator of Paris', arrives at Tan Son Nhut airbase to command all French forces in the region. He is vested with full military and civilian powers to act on behalf of incoming French high commissioner, Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu. Leclerc's stance is that France can only negotiate with the Viet Minh from a position of strength.

Arrival of the British fleet at Saigon's harbour.

Republican sentiments hardening in Sumatra. The Republican Governor of Sumatra, Acehnese lawyer Teuku Hasan, begins to assert his position in Medan. Flag-raisings and the launch of a Republican newspaper accompany this new assertiveness.

4 October

Work on new Japanese constitution initiated. At the end of a meeting between Japanese cabinet representatives and occupation forces GHQ, Konoe Fumimaro acting as minister of state asks General MacArthur if he has any instruction about a new government make-up. The interpreter's reply mistakenly uses the word 'constitution' for 'make-up', leading Konoe to believe MacArthur answered that the constitution must be revised. Despite earlier Japanese opposition to such a move, legal experts under Konoe's leadership begin to draft an amended version of the old Meiji constitution.



SECRET

14. Outstanding Liberal Provisions.

a. The sovereignty of the people is acknowledged.

b. Discriminations by birth, status, sex, race and nationality are prohibited. The peerage is abolished.

c. Workers benefits required include one 8 hour day, holidays with pay, free hospitalization and old age pensions.

d. A referendum permitting the people to express their will directly on legislation is provided.

e. Control of all finances including expenditures of the Imperial family is placed in the Diet. Carry over budgets are prohibited. Audits are required and the President of the Audit Bureau is to be elected.

f. The right to possess property is limited by the requirement that it be useful to the public welfare.

g. Land must be used for the best public interest.

h. A new Constitution must be enacted in 10 years.

15. Summary.

The provisions included in the proposed constitution are democratic and acceptable. Certain essential provisions are omitted. It is recommended that the following principles be required in any constitution before approval:

a. A clear statement that the Constitution is the Supreme Law of the Land.

b. Additions to the Rights of the People to accomplish the following:

(1) Granting rights similar to those accomplished by a writ of habeaus corpus.

(2) Guaranteeing speedy and public trials in criminal cases.

(3) Prohibiting placing an accused twice in jeopardy for the same offence.

(4) Guaranteeing protection against self-incrimination.

(5) Guaranteeing the right of an accused to be faced by all witnesses against him.

- 4 - SECRET

Courtesy of the National Diet Library of Japan

Secret U.S. memo on the new Japanese constitution.

Prince Konoe Fumimaro

Lao Issara seek regional support. In a memorandum to Chinese occupation authorities, Prince Phetsarath rejects the French protectorate. His aim is to broaden support from neighbouring states. Contacts are also made with Thailand through the Seri Thai, Cambodia through the Khmer Issarak, and Vietnam through the Viet Minh.

First steps toward a new Japanese constitution

It is often claimed that the Showa Constitution was imposed by the Americans. While American influence is undeniable, this claim ignores diverse national and historical factors active in the constitution's making. The intervention of General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), was crucial, but so was Japanese constitutional history dating back to the grassroots rights movements of the late nineteenth century, the socialist and liberal thought popular during the so-called Taisho Democracy period (1912–26) and the momentary spirit of international pacifism prompted by the war. The Constitution was the product not only of defeat and American influence, but also of Japan's own dissenting traditions.

On 4 October 1945, MacArthur issued a key directive to the Japanese government, emphasizing open discussion on the emperor's status, the release of political prisoners, the abolition of the Special Police and the repeal of repressive laws. This directive was followed by another a week later, advocating equality between men and women, the right to organize labour unions, liberal and democratic education, the abolition of oppressive institutions and economic liberalization. Exactly when MacArthur suggested a revision of the Meiji Constitution is unclear, but on 25 October the Japanese government itself set up an independent committee to revise the Constitution, led by the jurist Matsumoto Jōji.

The committee's proposals were far from liberal. One of the most contentious issues was the status of the emperor. The Japanese proposals virtually preserved the first four articles of the Meiji Constitution, which describe the emperor as 'inviolable and sacred' and define him as the country's sovereign. Unsatisfied by the likely Japanese proposals, and also alarmed by the creation of the Far Eastern Commission (FEC), some of whose members were keen to indict the emperor as a war criminal, MacArthur decided to draft a new Constitution at the beginning of February. Official drafting was begun on February 4th by the Government Section of MacArthur's General Headquarters, shortly after the Americans formally rejected the Japanese draft. The SCAP draft was ready in a week and handed to the Japanese government on 13th February. The American draft upheld the principles of popular sovereignty, gender equality and inalienable rights, to the dismay of

Beginning of the Meiji Constitution, promulgated in 1889.

Matsumoto and other Japanese conservatives who regarded its acceptance as capitulation.

However, these constitutional ideas were not entirely foreign to the Japanese. Shortly after the surrender, various liberal groups began to work on their own drafts. One group was the Constitutional Research Association (Kenpō Kenkyūkai) led by the 74-year-old socialist Takano Iwasaburō and the 41-year-old dissident legal scholar Suzuki Yasuzō. Their draft also upheld popular sovereignty and extended civic rights. Translated into English by the time the American drafting had started, their draft had a major impact on the SCAP draft.

Beate Sirota at about the time the constitution was drafted.

As for gender equality, prewar feminist leaders had begun campaigning for women's suffrage shortly after the war, and Beate Sirota, who spent her childhood in Japan and was now a member of the Government Section, was the driving force for the implementation of gender equality. Those Japanese who were marginalized before the war now found ideological allies among the Americans writing the new Constitution.

If the Matsumoto draft were defeated, it would be a defeat for authoritarian legal precepts. Within the Japanese legal elite, even Minobe Tatsukichi, whose liberal constitutionalism became a target of ultra-nationalism in the 1930s, could not fathom a polity without the emperor's sovereign authority. The conservatism of the dominant Japanese political culture was such that the radical liberalism embodied in the new Constitution may not have been realized without the American interlude.

Historians, however, have debated who initiated the non-war clause, Article 9 – MacArthur or the Japanese Prime Minister, Shidehara Kijūrō. What is clear is that they did not disagree on its inclusion. If some SCAP proposals, such as a unicameral legislature and provisions to ensure the rights of foreign nationals, were dropped during the subsequent Japanese revisions, the non-war provision survived.

The new Constitution was approved by the newly-elected Parliament, which now included women, on 7 October 1946. All in all, the claim that the new Constitution was imposed on the Japanese is short-sighted and ignores Japan's history and the deeply felt hope of its makers, both Japanese and Americans, for a more peaceful world.

Hiromi Sasamoto-Collins

See also the Role of Emperor (p. 49), Koseki 1998 and Dower 1999.

5 October

Americans appoint Korean advisors. Faced with rising popular discontent, General Hodge creates an 11-member Korean Advisory Council to assist the military government. This is led by the businessman and publisher, Kim Sŏngsu, accused by some of having been too close to the Japanese. With most appointees from the Korean Democratic Party, many Koreans feel the council does not represent them. The only leftist is Yŏ Unhyŏng, who quickly withdraws from the council. Another appointee, the northerner Cho Mansik, never attends.

Indonesian national army founded. With disorder growing on Java and Sumatra, the Republican government transforms the BKR into a proto-army, the People's Security Forces (TKR). There is little difference between the organizations or their personnel, however, and a multitude of *pemuda* and other outside groups continues to vie for power.

6 October

Inconclusive talks between Viet Minh and French. Hosted in his office by General Gracey, who quickly excuses himself, a meeting is held in Saigon between French and Vietnamese delegations. After two hours the only practical outcome is a verbal undertaking to release hostages, exchange prisoners and look for the body of murdered OSS Lt-Col. Peter Dewey.

U.S. troops move on Peiping. After formally accepting the surrender of Japanese troops in Tientsin, U.S. commanders decide to secure Peiping and its two major airfields ahead of the return of Chinese government forces; they realize that Tientsin's solitary airfield is inadequate as a logistical hub. The U.S. advance on Peiping is accomplished next day despite opposition from CCP forces in the surrounding countryside.

7 October

CCP forces thwart American landing. In the first of several such incidents over the coming month, an attempt by U.S. naval forces to land Chinese government troops at Chefoo is blocked by Communist opposition.

A treaty port opened by the British in 1862, Chefoo (now Yantai) enjoyed a strategic location on the Shantung peninsula and was a summer station for the U.S. Asiatic fleet until the outbreak of war. Located here was a well-known boarding school (pictured above) for the children of missionaries, diplomats and business people. They were interned by the Japanese in 1943. Held at the same camp and dying just before the war's end was the Scottish missionary, Eric Liddell. He is better known as one of the main characters in the film *Chariots of Fire*, the religious Olympic athlete who refused to race in the 100 metres heats on a Sunday but went on to win the 400 meters.

Cambodian premier calls for opposition to French return. During a cabinet meeting In Phnom Penh, Son Ngoc Thanh supports armed resistance and suggests the evacuation of Phnom Penh if the French return in force. At this point, if not before, his cabinet loses confidence in his judgment.

'Red Prince' returns to Laos. Prince Souphanouvong arrives in Savannakhet from Hué with a Viet Minh escort. He is warmly welcomed by the Viet Kieu militia forces but less enthusiastically by local Lao Issara forces; they seek to preserve their own political control. Next day he proceeds to Thakhek, where he creates the Liberation and Defence Army. A Committee of Independent Laos is created on the same day with the Red Prince as President and Phetsarath as honorary chairman.

Prince Souphanouvong (left) and his half-brother, Phetsarath (right), in Thailand in 1946.

8 October

First war crimes trial in the Philippines. At the direction of General MacArthur, now Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan but previously commander of U.S. forces in the Philippines, the first of several high-profile trials is initiated of Japanese military officials for wartime atrocities in the Philippines. Indicted is the former commander of Japanese forces in the Philippines, General Yamashita Tomoyuki, called the 'Tiger of Malaya' for his role in the fall of Singapore. A U.S. Army commission is established to try Yamashita as a war criminal on the basis of his command responsibility for the Rape of Manila. Yamashita was 80 km from the city at the time, and his lines of communication had been disrupted by American military action. He is nonetheless found guilty for having failed to prevent the massacres and atrocities. Yamashita will be executed in February 1946 and controversially becomes one of the convicted war criminals sanctified at Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 119134

General Yamashita Tomoyuki arriving at the military tribunal in Manila, Philippines, in 1945. Yamashita was the commanding general during the conquest of Malaya and later in the Philippines. Holding him responsible for atrocities committed by troops under his command and finding guilty of failing to prevent them, the trial set a controversial precedent known as 'command responsibility'. This held that an officer could be charged if he failed to control the acts of troops under his command.

After the Battle of Manila – Intramuros, 1945.

Courtesy of Intramuros Administration

9 October

First postwar Japanese cabinet resigns. The Higashikuni cabinet that was formed one day after the Japanese surrender comes to an end. Prince Naruhiko Higashikuni resigns after a dispute with the American occupation forces over the repeal of the 1925 Peace Preservation Law. A new government is formed by the prewar diplomat Shidehara Kijūrō.

Prime Minister Shidehara Kijūrō pictured with his cabinet on 9 October. All were reluctant to adopt a new, more liberal constitution (see p. 243).

Shidehara Kijūrō

Thai–British negotiations break down over British hard line. Peace negotiations between Thailand and Great Britain hit another snag when British negotiator M. E. Dening demands in Kandy, Ceylon, that Thailand accept his proposals, a course resolutely opposed by Thai Prime Minister Seni Pramoj. The talks break off as Dening is called away to deal with matters in the Netherlands Indies.

Left: Celebrating victory in Hong Kong. Despite the recent Sino–British struggle for control of Hong Kong, on 9 October the two countries joined to celebrate both Victory Day and Chinese National Day. Flying of the Chinese flag on this special occasion did not imply any British recognition of Chinese claims to the Crown Colony.

British arrive in Cambodia. Lt. Col. E.D. Murray is sent to Phnom Penh by General Gracey to release Allied prisoners of war, disarm the Japanese and re-establish order. He is accompanied by a platoon of Gurkhas and some support personnel. Members of the Cambodian cabinet soon convince him that Prime Minister Son Ngoc Thanh should be removed from office. Shortly after his arrival, French officials are released from detention and other civilians from house arrest. Hailed as a 'liberator' by the semi-official newspaper *Cambodge*, two days later Murray flies back to Saigon where he convinces Gracey that Thanh should be arrested by the French. Their recently arrived commander, General Leclerc, agrees.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 133384

Gurkha troops were a crucial element in British operations both in Indochina and throughout the wider SEAC region.

'Did they cherish their independence, which had fallen from the sky?'

Paul Tramoni, a French official in Phnom Penh who was interned by the Japanese in March 1945 and released *in October, wrote some years later of the ambiguities he noticed when he re-entered Franco–Cambodian society.*

Everything had changed. The Cambodians held the reins themselves and we found ourselves at the margin, without knowing what this would involve. We sensed the irreversibility of the situation, all the more when our Cambodian friends didn't come to see us as they had done in the past. Oh, when we met, they were friendly enough to be sure. But a certain reticence, something vague, a sort of mist was floating between them and ourselves … Did they cherish their independence, which had fallen out of the sky? In effect, the past had evaporated forever.

Paul Tramoni

From Tramoni 1966, p. 226. Translated from the French by David Chandler.

10 October

Japanese communists freed. Veteran communist leaders Tokuda Kyuichi and Shiga Yoshio are at last free after spending 18 years in prison for their party activities – but not before they have briefed General MacArthur's HQ on the Party's post-war plans. They are among about 3,000 political prisoners released after the war on the orders of the occupation authorities.

Leaders of the Japan Communist Party are greeted with jubilation when released from Fuchu Prison.

U.S. asserts position in southern Korea. Exasperated by claims of the Korean People's Republic to be the legitimate government of Korea, General Hodge asserts that the U.S. military government is the only legitimate authority in Korea south of the 38th Parallel. Henceforth, military officials begin taking over local government offices across the south and ejecting KPR representatives.

Korean leaders in 1945

The end of the Pacific War came as a surprise to most Koreans. The Soviet Union's entry into the war and its swift move into Korea was the first sign for many that Japan's day was over. Only at the very end did the Japanese authorities begin to make preparations for the inevitable; to do so earlier would have been dangerous. Concern that the Koreans would turn on their former colonial masters led General Abe Nobuyaki, the Japanese governor-general, to try to establish some organization to take over the running of the country and, above all, to preserve law and order. He found few takers among the Koreans but the choice fell upon Yŏ Unhyŏng (1885–1947). Yŏ had a long record of opposing Japanese rule, for which he had served time in prison, and had links with both the left and right wings of Korean nationalism. Yŏ set down a series of conditions, which the Japanese accepted on 15 August, and quickly organized a Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) on 16 August.

To many, the flame of Korean independence had seemed to be alive only among exiles in China and the United States or among guerrillas in Man-

churia. But now the peninsula was in political ferment, with new parties and groupings forming and reforming. Yŏ drew on both left and right in the hope of preserving unity but inevitably, leftists such as the communist Pak Hon-yong (1900–1956), with a long record of opposing the Japanese colonial authorities, came to the fore. More conservative figures, such as the industrialist Kim Sŏng-su (1891–1955), founder of the *Donga ilbo* newspaper and of the predecessor to Korea University, had only been able to function by working with the colonial regime, which tainted their record to many.

Meanwhile, CPKI committees spread throughout the country, operating both north and south of the 38th Parallel, the agreed dividing line between the Soviets, who entered the peninsula on 10 August, and United States occupation forces that began to arrive a month later. By early September, the CPKI had convened a National Assembly, which in turn established a Korean People's Republic on 6 September. Wishing to keep all elements in play, Yŏ and his supporters drew up a government list for the new republic's government that included representatives of groups across the political spectrum, including those abroad. At the head of the list was Dr Rhee Syngman (1875–1965), the first Korean Ph.D., once prime minister and later president of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai and still an exile in the United States. Two veteran nationalists still in China, Kim Ku (1876–1949) and Kim Kyu-sik (1881–1950), were also included, as were communist guerrilla leaders such as Mu Jong (1905–?1951) and Kim Il-sung (1912–1994). The former was in China and the latter in the Soviet Union. Another veteran nationalist leader, Cho Mansik (1882?–1950?), a Christian based north of the Parallel, was also named as a cabinet member. Yŏ was deputy chairman and Kim Sŏng-su minister of education.

The Soviet forces in the north found the 'People's Committees' that represented the Korean People's Republic congenial, partly because they were dominated by leftists who were untainted by links to the Japanese. They therefore used them and Cho until the end of 1945. Following popular protests against an imposed 'trusteeship', the Soviet Union supported a different approach under the nominal leadership of the former guerrilla leader, Kim Il-sung.

In the south, the People's Republic got short shrift from the United States forc-

Syngman Rhee

es. As far as General Hodge (1893–1963) and his colleagues were concerned, Korea was not ready for any form of self-government. The political ferment they encountered, with its strong left-wing bias, made them highly suspicious and fearful of a Soviet plot to take over the whole peninsula. Having accepted the formal Japanese surrender, U.S. forces began to use former Japanese colonial officials and police to enforce law and order, a move that caused outcry and eventually had to be abandoned.

But as the U.S.–Soviet wartime alliance fell apart and the Cold War began, while in Korea the political groupings coalesced into political parties, it was clear which Korean political actors the U.S. administration preferred to work with. Rhee's return to Korea in October bolstered the U.S. military government's ties with more conservative groups; the left was sidelined and then outlawed. By the end of 1945, Korea in both north and south was settling into patterns of government that, reinforced by the Korean War, would change little until the end of the century.

James Hoare

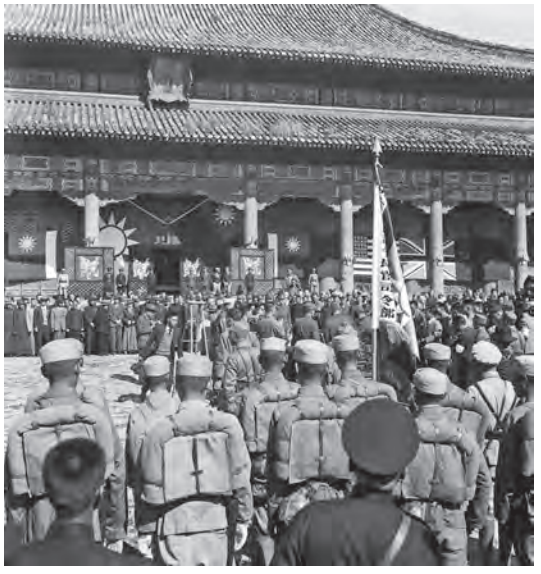
KMT–CCP negotiations continue. About six weeks after the start of negotiations in Chungking, a joint KMT–CCP communiqué emphasises progress. Both parties claim to accept three principles: peaceful national reconstruction, dispute resolution via negotiation, and maintenance of legal and equal rights of different political parties. Nonetheless, substantial divergences remain. Mao flies back to Yen'an the following day, Chou En-lai staying on to continue the negotiations.

Japanese surrender in Peiping. After the arrival of Chinese government forces in the city, the Japanese North China Area Army formally surrenders in Peiping in a large-scale public ceremony.

Americans extend their operations in China. As part of the American strategy to transport Chinese government forces to the north and repatriate surrendered Japanese troops home, U.S. naval forces secure Tsingtao, the best port north of Shanghai.

Above: Japanese officers arrive at the Forbidden City in Peiping for the surrender ceremony, which is attended by a huge crowd. Opposite: The ceremony underway.

Showdown in Laos. Prompted by De Gaulle, King Sisavangvong dismisses Prince Phetsarath as prime minister of Luang Prabang and strips him of the viceroy title. The move is two days after Lao Issara leaders informed the king of their intention to establish a constitutional monarchy and a day after an informal parliament was created by the Lao-pen-Lao in Vientiane. Nationalists respond to the sacking by forming a revolutionary government, which in turn appoints a provisional national assembly and invites the king to dissolve his royal government. On the 12th, it proclaims the country's independence under its authority. A provisional constitution, national flag and anthem are also approved. Meanwhile, young Lao loyal to Phetsarath and his Lao Issara allies begin to take over the old colonial administration. On the 15th, Phetsarath formally accepts his vice-regal demotion; the prince is confident of his ability to govern without a royal mandate.



British concerned about deteriorating situation in Cochinchina. After a number of Viet Minh attacks are launched on French and British positions in Saigon the previous night, General Gracey orders advances into Saigon's northern suburbs, further stretching his overextended forces. Later that day, he flies to attend an inter-allied conference in Singapore together with General Leclerc. Here he faces criticism for his actions but is backed by Leclerc. The increasingly concerned SEAC commander, Lord Mountbatten, who also faces major security problems in Indonesia and political headaches in Burma, Thailand and Malaya, is frustrated by the uncompromising French attitude and wants to avoid having his forces drawn into a full-scale conflict. He grants Gracey additional reinforcements but demands that the general works to promote a French–Viet Minh dialogue.

General Philippe de Hauteclocque, more commonly known by his *nom de guerre*, Leclerc.

Malayan Union plan presented to U.K. Parliament. The Colonial Secretary provides the details of the Malayan Union plan to the House of Commons. The Union would include the nine states of the Malay Peninsula (including Penang and Malacca), while Singapore would be kept as a special colony 'owing to its special needs'.

Japanese regain control of Bandung. Much of the West Javanese city of Bandung is in local hands. Beneath the facade of Republican authority, however, an inconspicuous Japanese control remains; few weapons have been handed over. When local *pemuda* attempt a forceful takeover and seize an arms factory, the Japanese swiftly counterattack and within a day have subdued the city. They surrender Bandung to arriving British troops on the 18th.

Convoy of 36th Indian Brigade troops advancing from Buitenzorg (Bogor) in the operation to clear the road between Jakarta and Bandung, October 1945 (see map p. 283).

British face difficulties in Sumatra. When British troops begin disembarking at Belawan (outside Medan) and Padang, they find a newly established and assertive Republican authority. The situation encourages pro-Dutch militias to act more aggressively, provoking the first serious anti-Dutch violence in Medan on 13 October. This forces the British to despatch significant reinforcements to Medan by the end of the month.

Polarization in Sumatra

The vacuum between awareness of the Japanese surrender in late August and an effective Allied presence in October–November caused particular dangers in Sumatra. Some of the aristocrats who longed for a return of pre-war stability and their own privileges contacted Allied representatives to explain why they had had to cooperate with the Japanese. Teuku Daud Cumbok, the strong-minded *guncho* (district chief) of Lammeulo in Aceh's polarized Pidë district, was the first to do so on 15 September; he made no secret of his hostility to Republican flags. As no Allied troops arrived, those who had gained from the Japanese were increasingly emboldened to denounce such action as treachery.

Many nationalist politicians were in the latter category, though initially demoralized and fearful of Allied punishment. The most confident mass movement with Japanese gains to protect was the PUSA network of Acehnese reformist *ulama*, who had since 1943 been rewarded with control of a system of Islamic courts throughout Aceh, which aristocrats like Daud Cumbok were eager to destroy. On 12–15 October, the Pemuda PUSA youth movement took effective control of the youth movement in Aceh, and supported PUSA leader Te-

Daud Beureu'eh

ungku Daud Beureu'eh in declaring the Republican struggle was a holy war (*jihad*), obligatory on all Muslims, and that traitors should be treated like *kafir* (unbelievers) – enemies of that *jihad*. Allied troops never did reach Aceh to mediate this conflict, which peaked in the first weeks of 1946, as the whole *uléëbalang* (aristocrat-official) class was eliminated in the wake of a civil war against their supporters in Lammeulo.

At a grassroots level, those village heads and higher officials held directly responsible for the levies of rice and labour imposed by the Japanese military often paid the price after the surrender. During a three-month period beginning in November, local hierarchies in many parts of Indonesia were overturned and village leaders dismissed or sometimes killed. Only in a few cases was there coherent leadership for more widespread 'social revolutions', as some veteran Marxists described these events. Muslim counter-elites provided such leadership in Pekalongan and Banten as well as in Aceh; Marxists did so in East Sumatra and Surakarta.

The upheaval in Aceh made that province an enthusiastic supporter of the fight against the Dutch, but also removed the only strata of society that was on the same wavelength as the western-educated nationalist leadership of the Republic. Aceh's relations with Jakarta in the longer term were fraught by distrust and, in 1953, Daud Beureu'eh led a rebellion that posed the most serious long-term threat to Jakarta's authority.

East Sumatra had also experienced polarization between aristocrats and nationalists at the Japanese entry in 1942. When the Japanese surrender became known in August, those who felt most endangered by their support for the Japanese, including Muhammadiah leader Hamka, fled the province, while the sultans joined some moderate nationalists in a common front hoping to explain to the Allies that there had been no choice other than cooperation with Japan. As Japanese-trained youth groups mobilized in late September, however, conflict between armed gangs became increasingly common, whether on the basis of ethnicity, ideology, being pro-Dutch or pro-Japanese, or a plain competition for resources. The Sultan of Deli's palace in Medan was protected by the British after their arrival in October, but the other sultans would all be killed, captured or forced to flee in another 'social revolution' in early March 1946 that nobody fully controlled.

Anthony Reid

11 October

New Japanese premier meets MacArthur. Prime Minister Shidehara meets General MacArthur to introduce himself formally as the new premier of Japan. In response, MacArthur recommends constitutional revisions and reformation of Japanese social structure.

Photo and information from Klaus Schlichtmann 2009

Considered to be a pacifist and known for his opposition to militarism, Shidehara was aiming for the elimination of any military influence over the government. For him, however, a total revision of the old Meiji Constitution of 1889 was not yet an issue. But in January 1946 (at another meeting with MacArthur) it was apparently at Shidehara's initiative that an article renouncing war and the maintenance of a military establishment be included in the new Japanese constitution being drafted (see p. 243). The event is portrayed (above) in a popular history manga.

12 October

Malayan Union plan announced. Malayan newspapers publish news of the imminent announcement of the introduction of the Malayan Union. After this happens on October 15, Malay activists begin to worry what the Malayan Union's liberal citizenship policy might mean for the rights of the 'native inhabitants' of Malaya.

Courtesy of Fahmi Reza

Malay concern about their rights gave rise to demonstrations and the formation of UMNO (the United Malays National Organization), which rules Malaysia to this day.

The place of Malays in a new world order

The 100-day period between the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945 and the end of November 1945 was crucial for the Malays and, notably, their small intellectual class. The Japanese surrender ushered in a period of insecurity over Malaya's political future, British policy towards collaborators and Chinese domination through the MPAJA (Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army). The surrender was followed by MPAJA reprisals on collaborators, which later erupted into bloody racial clashes in Perak, Johor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang that damaged ethnic relations ever after. Earlier in 1944, racial clashes had erupted in Johor. Japanese wartime policies and prewar British policies were equally at fault.

A few days before the surrender, the Japanese had sponsored the formation of KRIS, which has been variously described as Kekuatan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung (the strength of the Indonesian people in the Peninsula) and Kekuatan Rakyat Istimewa Semenanjung (the strength of the special people of the peninsula). The Japanese allowed KRIS to discuss independence although, by then, Malay territories were reduced by half following the cession of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu to Siam in August 1943. KRIS aimed to pursue Malayan independence within the framework of Indonesia Raya.

A major voice in early Malay nationalism was the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM, Young Malays Union) founded by Ibrahim Yaacob in 1938 (a KMM meeting shown above). Although it supported the Japanese invasion, the KMM was soon closed down by the Japanese. KMM cadres went on to form the nucleus of several political movements after the war including the MNP.

The much anticipated KRIS congress never got off the ground due to the Japanese surrender. Instead a KRIS committee discussed three important issues, namely independence within Indonesia Raya, Chinese domination of the MPAJA, and Malay rights and the issue of collaboration. The meeting passed 12 resolutions. Two of them called for the setting up of a democratic peoples' Malaya involving the aristocracy and former KMM leaders while a third called for a guerrilla war to oppose the British landing. None was carried out.

Following British re-entry, Whitehall announced the formation of the Malayan Union on 15 October 1945. In December, Sir Harold McMichael began meeting with Malay rulers to secure their consent for this new postwar political order. The rulers agreed under pressure, although this would spell the end of their special position and that of the Malays. On 17 October, the Malay Nationalist Party

Ahmad Boestamam

(MNP) was formed in Ipoh by Ahmad Boestamam, Dahari Ali and members of the Malayan Communist Party like Mokhtaruddin Lasso, Musa Ahmad, Rashid Maidin and Abdullah C. D. The MNP was the first post-war Malay political party to be formed although leaders like Burhanuddin al-Helmy still harboured hopes for Indonesia Raya. Its youth wing, API, which was headed by Boestamam, found strong support among the radicalized Malay youth who were exposed to anti-west indoctrination under Japanese rule.

To understand the metamorphosis of Malay youth, scholars often look to the Japanese period when these youth joined the *giyu-gun*, *giyu-tai* and *heiho* volunteer corps. Equally crucial was the socio-economic transformation that had taken place within Malay society before 1941 as, for example, in the Temerloh district. The *giyu-gun*'s officer corps was picked by the Japanese in consultation with Ibrahim, who harboured the idea that it would be used to further the cause of Malay nationalism. Instead, the Japanese used it against the MPAJA in ways that later contributed to the poor ethnic relations during and after the occupation. Due to Japanese mistrust, the *giyu-gun* was constantly on the move while its strength was reduced by 50%, leaving the Malay force with two companies and a cadre of staff officers. With impending Japanese defeat, it was transformed into an artillery unit.

Sukarno's declaration of Indonesian independence on 17 August ended the left's struggle for independence within Indonesia Raya. Two days later, Ibrahim Yaacob fled to Indonesia leaving the mass of radical Malay youth to face an uncertain future. Each pursued different actions, for instance some fighting the Dutch in the war of Indonesian independence while others stayed home and got involved in anti-Chinese clashes.

As for the Malayan Union, the strong Malay opposition climaxed in the formation of UMNO in May 1946. This involved the Malay right and MNP although the latter soon left the party. It must be noted at this point the MNP had secured far greater Malay support than any other party until it was decimated by the Emergency after June 1948. Those who escaped the colonial dragnet joined the MCP's 10th Regiment in Temerloh, which was a strong base of the MNP, and other political parties including UMNO and the Socialist Party.

Abu Talib Ahmad

13 October

Kim Il-sung begins his political career. With the Communist Party of Korea's organization and membership firmly based in southern Korea, and pursuing its own independent agenda there, the Soviets encourage the formation of a North Korean Bureau of the party. Kim Il-sung is a member but not its secretary. Even so, when 100,000 people gather in downtown Pyongyang next day to celebrate Korea's liberation from Japan, Kim Il-sung is introduced to the crowd by Soviet commanders together with Cho Mansik and other Korean leaders on the podium.

Japan decides to study constitutional revision. Prime Minister Shidehara calls for an extraordinary cabinet meeting to discuss constitutional revision. He plans to establish a Constitutional Problems Investigation Committee under the leadership of Matsumoto Jōji. Its work parallels the constitutional revision efforts recently initiated by Konoe Fumimaro, former Minister of State and now Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal.

Photo E.M. McQuillan, courtesy of the Australian War Memorial, 122016

Civilians thronged the approaches to the wharf and adjoining harboursides in Sydney on 13 October 1945 when HMS *Formidable* berthed with 1,300 returning troops, including many former POWs.

14 October

First major battle of the Indonesian revolution. Demands by Indonesian *pemuda* for Japanese troops in Semarang to hand over all of their weapons escalate into fighting. What follows is the massacre of several hundred Japanese civilians and an outraged response by the Japanese garrison. By the 20th, when British troops arrive on the scene, several thousand locals are dead.

A key actor in the Semarang tragedy was the Japanese commander, Major Kido Shinichiro (right).

Courtesy of Shinkan Sha

Apart from launching the political career of Kim Il-sung (see p. 259), the victory celebrations staged by the Red Army in Pyongyang on 14 October 1945 featured other actors far more prominent at the time, not least Cho Mansik (second from right).

> [The Japanese went] fighting mad. They swept through the town … like one of the Mongolian hordes of Genghis Khan or Tamerlane. They took no prisoners and everyone with arms or suspected of carrying arms was captured and killed. Whole lorry loads of prisoners with their hands tied behind their backs were driven out into the countryside and never heard of again.
>
> ~ later British report on the Semarang fighting

15 October

Chinese communists launch 'transportation campaign'. The CCP central committee orders its central and northern forces to concentrate on the 'transportation campaign', aimed at deterring and eliminating the northward-marching Nationalist army. The most capable cadres and troops are to be mobilized for this purpose.

Cambodian premier deposed by French. The commander of French forces in Indochina, General Leclerc, flies to Phnom Penh and arrests Son Ngoc Thanh, who is flown immediately to prison in Saigon. By accident or design, King Sihanouk is absent from Phnom Penh on a religious pilgrimage.

A general arrests a prime minister

In 1982, the British journalist Anthony Barnett was doing extensive research on modern Cambodian history. In publications about British military activity in French Indochina in the closing months of 1945, he came across the name of Lt. Col. E.D. Murray DSO, OBE , an Indian Army officer who had been named by the British as Supreme Allied Commander in Cambodia in October 1945.

Barnett discovered that Murray was living in retirement in the seaside town of Worthing and would be happy to talk about the past. Barnett recorded several hours of Murray's colorful reminiscences and edited the transcripts for publication. Sadly they were never published and Murray died in 2002. The excerpt that follows is printed with Barnett's permission.

Murray arrived in Phnom Penh on 8 October. On the 11th, he flew to Saigon to suggest to his superior, General Gracey, that Son Ngoc Thanh, Cambodia's nationalist and pro-Japanese prime minister, be removed from office by the French. The recently arrived French commander, General Leclerc, agreed and Murray returned to Phnom Penh.

On the afternoon of 15 October, Murray arranged for Son Ngoc Thanh to wait in his office while Murray went to Phnom Penh airport to meet General Leclerc. His narrative follows.

Murray: We arrived at my headquarters and went into my office. It was like a comic opera. There was the Prime Minister with [my associate, Major] David Wenham, chitter chattering about elephant shoots, and General Leclerc strode in, pushing me aside, with his gunman. He had a gunman, who had a gun in a shoulder hoister up un-

General Leclerc

der his shoulder. The gunman put his hand up on the holster. And Leclerc just looked straight at the corner of the [very large] room. Poor little Prime Minister thought Leclerc was welcoming him and got up sort of to say "How lovely!" He was seized by the scruff of the neck by this gunman, hustled into the car and off they took him. I never saw him again. Or General Leclerc.

Barnett: Did Leclerc say, 'I arrest you?'

Murray: Nobody said anything. Nobody said anything. It really was quite extraordinary. Leclerc and the gunman pushed me aside; in my own office, damn it, walked in. Leclerc had a stick, he looked at the top corner of the room, the poor little man was down there. The gunman was walking with his hand [on his holster]. It really was … David and I felt terrible about it afterwards. It was so unnecessary. We would have done it much better, I think. It could have been done much better.

Epilogue: From other sources I learned that Thanh's chauffeur, seeing Thanh being spirited away by Leclerc, was able to drive off and warn some of Thanh's nationalist colleagues in time for them to evade arrest. At lunch, Thanh had denied a report that had been broadcast by Radio France that he was soon to visit Saigon in order to invite the French to reimpose their Protectorate.

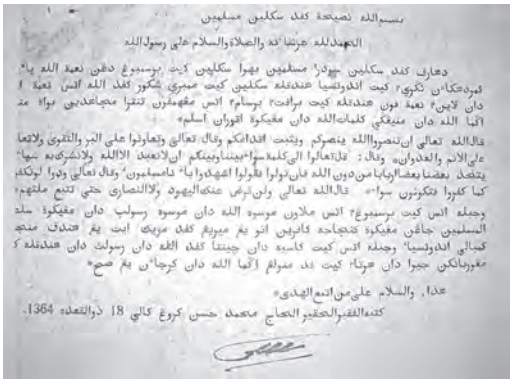
David Chandler

Former Thai premier charged with war crimes. Thai authorities arrest former Thai premier Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram and key aides, including former foreign minister Wichit Wichitwatankan, on allegations of war crimes. The move, clearly aimed to impress the victorious Allies, targets those deemed responsible for the wartime alliance with Japan and the declaration of war on Great Britain and the United States.

Jihad declared in Aceh. Teungku Daud Beureu'eh and three other prominent Aceh *ulama* (Islamic scholars) agree to a statement declaring the struggle against the Dutch return is a holy war (*jihad fi sabilillah*) and a continuation of the *ulama*-led struggle of the last years of the Aceh War fifty years earlier (see p. 254 as well as opposite).

Muslims embrace the Indonesian revolution

In mid-October, as the threat of violent conflict with European-led re-occupying forces became more imminent across Indonesia, Muslim leaders began to commit themselves to the Indonesian cause in a new way: by religious proclamations. Islamic scholars used *fatwas* or juridical decisions to encourage other Muslims to support Indonesian independence and to assure them that this was a just cause.



بسم الله نصيحة كفد سكلين مسلمين

الحمد لله عزنڬ ده والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله

دهارف كفد سكلين بهود، مسلمين بهرا سكلين كيت برسمبوع دفن نعبة الله يا.
كمرد حكان تكرى، كيت انڬولنسيا عندفله سكلين كيت صبري، شكوز كفد الله انس نعبة ا
دان لاين، نعبة فون عندفله كيت برالت، برسام، انس مفهمفون تنفرا مجاعدين بوا، مد
اكبا الله دان منيفكي كليات الله دان مفيكوة اقوراين اسلم،

قال الله تعالى ان تنصروا الله ينصركم ويثبت اقدامكم وقال تعالى وتعاونوا على البر والتقوى ولا تعاونوا
على الاثم والعدوان، وقال: قل تعالوا الى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم ان لا نعبد الا الله ولا نشرك به شيا،
ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا ارباب من دون الله فان تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا با، نامسلمون، وقال تعالى ودوا لو تكفرون
كما كفروا فتكونون سواء، قال الله تعالى ولن ترضى عنك اليهود ولا النصارى حتى تتبع ملتهم،
وجمله انس كيت برسمبوغ، انس ملاون موسوه الله دان موسوه رسولب دان مفيكوة سلة
المسلمين جاغن مفيكوة تنجاجه كافرين انو يغ ميريغ كفد مريك ايت يغ هندق منجه
كمباني اندونسيا، وجملة انس كيت كاسبه دان جينتا كفد الله دان رسولب دان هندفله ك
مغورباتكن جيوا دان هرتا، كيت ند مماغ اكبا الله دان كرجا، ن يغ صح،

هذا، والسلام على من اتبع الهدى،

كتبه الفقير الحقير الحاج محمد حسن كروغ كالي 18 ذوالقعده 1364.

First *fatwa* issued in Aceh.

The earliest major *fatwa* was issued in Aceh, the northern tip of Sumatra, on 15 October. Quoting four different verses from the Qur'an, the local scholars who signed the decision agreed that the Indonesian fight for independence against foreign powers was a war in the way of God, and that all able-bodied Muslims were obliged to support this effort. A more famous *fatwa* to the same effect was issued on the 22 October in East Java by the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest Islamic association. The NU *fatwa* was even more specific, saying that all Muslim men within one day's journey (listed at 94 km) from Surabaya were individually obliged by religious duty to travel to the city to defend it against British and Dutch forces; the duty to support the revolution was collectively (rather than individually) mandatory on Muslim men outside this radius.

These two famous *fatwas* were only the beginning of the religious proclamations by Muslim leaders. Soon, councils in almost every region and town were issuing such juridical decisions to encourage and reassure Muslim participants in the Indonesian revolution. In fact, so many of these *fatwas* were issued that, in November 1945, Vice President Hatta, himself a devout Muslim, made a government announcement forbidding anyone from declaring the Indonesian revolution a Holy War – it seems that the government feared this was sending the wrong signal abroad.

The support from religious leaders in the form of *fatwas* was one among many symbols of the Muslim community's enthusiastic support for the independence struggle. Over the next four years, from 1945 to 1949, Muslims organized themselves into religiously-based militias, community kitchens, first-aid brigades, and local governmental councils to defend the nascent Indonesian Republic. The religious proclamations of October 1945 were just the first step in a whole-hearted Muslim embrace of the revolution.

Kevin W. Fogg

16 October

Syngman Rhee returns home. After more than three decades in exile, the veteran hero of Korean resistance to Japanese rule returns to Seoul from the United States. Despite later denials, his return seems to be at the collusion of the U.S. occupation authorities, with Rhee landing in one of General MacArthur's own transports. Four days later, he makes his first public appearance, at a welcoming ceremony put on by the U.S. military in Seoul.

Indonesian government restructured. Vice President Hatta issues Proclamation X, changing the form of government from a presidential to a parliamentary system, with a new body (Working Committee of the KNIP) in a supervisory capacity. The KNIP begins to function as a parliament under a new chairman, the Socialist Sutan Sjahrir (see also p. 122).

Courtesy of Don O'Brien

Flanked by General Hodge and other U.S. military, Syngman Rhee made his first public speech on Korean soil on 20 October after a 40-year absence. He astounded the Americans by making a forthright denunciation of Soviet occupation methods in northern Korea.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, 121977

Australian troops sightseeing in Pontianak after occupying the town earlier that day. Note the Republican Chinese flags flying above the shops.

West Borneo finally liberated. Two months after the Japanese surrender, Australian troops and Dutch officials at long last enter Pontianak. The largely Chinese population greets them with not a single Dutch tricolour but many Chinese flags. The Japanese massacre of the local elite in early 1944 means that NICA has few allies to help them re-establish Dutch rule.

17 October

Return of Taiwan imminent. Chinese government forces land at Kirun (now Keelung) in northern Taiwan and begin marching towards Taihoku (Taipei) to accept the Japanese surrender. Before its conquest by Ching forces in the 17th century, Taiwan was never part of China. It was also ceded to Japan in 1895 before the fall of this 'foreign' dynasty. Nonetheless, both KMT and CCP leaders regard it as an integral part of Chinese territory.

The 'army of beggars' marches towards Taipei.

Taiwan and the return of Chinese rule

Press reports and official documents of the time show clearly that Taiwan's colonial administration was brought to a complete stop after the Emperor's concession of defeat. A political and administrative vacuum lasted for 70 days until 25 October, when the Administrative Commander's Office was established by the new regime from the mainland. During this time, no police or judicial system existed, but the Taiwanese took over most public utilities. Electricity and water supplies remained normal and the postal service, telephone, highway and railroad transportation all operated smoothly. Consumer prices were stable and the economy showed no sign of decline. All in all, this was a surprising period of high autonomy without the accompanying political chaos that characterized experiences elsewhere.

Everywhere there were banners with the slogan, 'Celebrating our return to the mother country's bosom' and indeed, the Taiwanese people had limitless expectations of the mother country. China had defeated Japan and was acknowledged as one of the world's four great powers, along with the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Hence the Taiwanese perceived a leap in status from colonial servants to citizens of a victorious Great Power.

After a series of delays that only enhanced a common feeling of anticipation and hope (ships carrying the 18th

Army, which was tasked with occupying Taiwan, were caught in a storm and had to return home), 12,000 soldiers and 2,000 officers of the 70th Army finally entered the port of Keelung on 17 October aboard more than 30 American warships. The army marched into Keelung city amid a sea of waving flags and cheering voices. But the real surprise was the condition of the army: the Taiwanese public saw a group of men wearing tattered clothes and grass sandals, staggering in their steps. Each soldier carried a broken umbrella and a wok on his back, while some toted bundles with various kinds of woks and bags of rice on poles, as if moving their entire possessions. These troops were nicknamed 'an army of beggars' on the mainland, because they were from the poverty-stricken inland and their equipment was the worst in the Chinese Army. Their appearance was in stark contrast with the Japanese soldiers who brought up the rear of the line; they were full of spirit, neat and clean, and well disciplined.

Over the subsequent decades, and in marked contrast to citizens of other former Japanese colonies, the Taiwanese people retained an amiable attitude toward Japan. One can point to many reasons for this, while at the same time acknowledging that the process began on that first day of occupation.

Huang Chih-huei

See also Huang 2003.

Pro-French forces consolidate power in Cambodia. On orders from Lt. Col. Murray, Allied Supreme Commander for Cambodia, Japanese troops in Phnom Penh disarm the Green Shirts, a nationalist militia formed three months earlier. The same day, the king's uncle, Prince Sisowath Monireth, replaces the detained Son Ngoc Thanh as prime minister. Two days later, a new six-man cabinet is sworn in with very few changes in its make-up but with an informal mandate to negotiate with the French.

One of the most prominent members of the Sisowath royal line, Prince Sisowath Monireth was passed over for the throne by the French in favour of Norodom Sihanouk, who they considered to be more pliable. The prince, however, remained heir to the throne during Sihanouk's early reign.

British military rule ends in Burma. Civilian administration is restored under Governor Dorman-Smith in accordance with the British government White Paper for the reconstruction and rule of post-war Burma. During his discussions with Aung San on the country's post-war governance and plans for an Executive Council, Aung San demands a decisive AFPFL role: 11 of the 15 positions on the council. Negotiations will fail due to a lack of will on the part of Dorman-Smith. The governor also does not recognize the AFPFL as a national mass organization representing the people of Burma (see also p. 285).

Vietnamese push for American support. Ho Chi Minh sends a telegram to President Truman arguing for DRV participation in the UN Advisory Commission for the Far East. He follows up next day with a letter (also addressed to Chiang Kai-shek) arguing the Vietnamese position following the Japanese surrender. The first articulation of the U.S. policy on Indochina for many months is aired on the 20th. Speaking in New York, John Carter Vincent, head of the State Department's Office of Far Eastern Affairs, declares that the U.S. government does not question French sovereignty. But, he adds, the U.S. will not assist or participate in 'forceful measures for the reimposition of control.' With France still facing severe shortages of transport and equipment, however, the fact is that U.S. ships are transporting French troops, equipment and supplies to Saigon.

Courtesy of David Marr

The Viet Minh were quick to emphasize their links with the Allies, whose flags were often prominently displayed, as here at Hanoi's town hall. One Allied flag was absent, however – the French tricolour.

18 October

American fleet blocked in northern ports. Soviet authorities refuse to allow U.S. ships to land Chinese government troops at Dairen. The U.S. fleet then redirects to Hulutao and Yingkow where occupying CCP forces with Soviet collusion again block any landing.

Courtesy of U.S. National Archives

Envoy meets Sultan of Johor. Sir Harold MacMichael, a special representative from the British government tasked with obtaining approval for the introduction of the Malayan Union from local rulers, meets with the first leader on his itinerary, the Sultan of Johor. The Malay public would later take special issue with MacMichael's reportedly high-handed attitude toward the Sultans.

Right: Two U.S. admirals whose transportation of Chinese troops was frustrated by the Soviet tactics were Daniel E. Barbey (left) and Thomas C. Kinkaid. Despite repeated Chinese demands, they refused to embroil the U.S.A. in China's developing civil war by landing KMT troops in a conflict area.

Soviet sea denial in Port Arthur and Dairen

Taking advantage of several vaguely written articles in the Sino–Soviet Friendship Treaty, signed with the Nationalist government on 14 August 1945, the Soviet Union actively intervened in the Chinese Civil War by blocking international access to Manchuria's main ports, thereby helping to tip the military balance in favor of the Communists. Soviet assistance ensured that the Chinese communists would never face a combined land-sea attack from the Nationalist Army and Navy. This enabled the People's Liberation Army to surround and destroy Nationalist troops sequentially.

In talks leading up to the February 1945 Yalta conference, Joseph Stalin promised W. Averell Harriman, the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow, that he would 'support America's open door policy' backing China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. By the time the agreement was signed on 11 February, however, Stalin had convinced Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill to grant the USSR a 'pre-eminent' position in Manchuria. This was widely understood to mean 'in regard to other powers, not to China.' During Sino–Soviet talks in the summer of 1945, Stalin insisted that

'pre-eminent interests' meant greater than 'China's interests' as well. This interpretation vastly exceeded Yalta's terms.

Sino–Soviet negotiations resulting in the Sino–Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance agreed that Port Arthur (in Chinese Lüshun) would be fully under Soviet control while the administration of the city of Dairen (Dalian) would be split, with the USSR exerting control over this strategic port only during times of war. When the Soviet government refused to return control of Dairen to China during the autumn of 1945, however, Moscow claimed that without a signed peace treaty with Japan, the port continued to fall under the military 'administration of the Port Arthur naval base' and it 'sees no basis for a change of the regime.'

The Nationalist government repeatedly denounced Moscow's interpretation, arguing these terms were based on precautionary measures against the possible re-emergence of an aggressive Japan and not as means of fostering aggressive competition between China and the Soviet Union. When the Nationalist Navy tried to land troops at the alternate port of Newchwang, the USSR foiled this plan while sticking to the letter of their agreement. The Soviets withdrew from Newchwang, which was then occupied by Chinese communist guerrilla forces. The Soviet authorities then notified the Chinese government that they could not guarantee a safe arrival for Nationalist troops.

By directly denying Nationalist ships access and allowing selected ports to fall into Communist hands, the Soviet Union effectively halted the flow of Nationalist troops by sea to many of the most strategic areas in Manchuria. The United States Navy was powerless to help because, under General Order No. 1, access to ports was limited to the country tasked with accepting Japanese surrender. Hence, the United States could not intervene to assist the Nationalists in the Chinese civil war.

The Communist victory in Manchuria, which was the first step in taking power throughout mainland China, can thus be attributed in large measure to the USSR's sea denial policy in Port Arthur, Dairen, and along the Manchurian littoral.

Bruce A. Elleman

See also Elleman 2008.

The defeat of Nationalist forces in the Chinese civil war can in part be explained by a deft Soviet denial of U.S. sea power in northern Chinese waters.

Courtesy: Mongolian Nat. Archives

20 October

Unanimous vote for independence in Outer Mongolia. After a month of meetings across the length and breadth of the Mongolian People's Republic, a national referendum on independence is held monitored by Chinese officials. According to official results, all voters opt for independence. The result is accepted by the Chinese government, which recognizes the MPR's independence in January 1946.

Courtesy of the Mongolian National Archives

Mongolian voters queuing to vote on 20 October.

National referendum for Mongolian independence

On 14 August 1945, while the Mongolian–Soviet army was still marching against the Japanese army in Inner Mongolia and Manchuria, the Chinese and Soviet governments exchanged official pledges. In its note, the Chinese Government 'recognizes the independence of Outer Mongolia in her existing boundaries, if they prove their will to be independent nation state after the war'. The Soviet Union, satisfied, replied that the government of Soviet Union respected the independence and territorial integrity of the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR).

On 21 September, in accordance with the agreement between Soviet Union and China, representatives of the Small Khural, the MPR's governing body, resolved to conduct a nationwide National Referendum for Mongolian Independence on 20 October. According to the decision, all citizens with voting rights should participate. People ranging from herders to workers to elites attended over 13,000 meetings held throughout the country. In the meetings people expressed their pride in Mongolia's road to independence and stated that they were very keen to vote for Mongolian independence.

Chiang Kai-Shek immediately sent a delegation led by Li Fazhang, Deputy Internal Minister, to observe the national referendum process without direct involvement beyond using the term 'Outer Mongolia'.

Bumtsend G, head of the MPR Central Commission for National Independence, met with Li Fazhang at 6:00 p.m on

22 October to present the preliminary results of the referendum. Deputy head of the central commission, Ch. Surenjav, Deputy Foreign Minister E. Namsrai and translator Rentsensonom also participated in the meeting. According to the Central Commision, 'On 20 October, 1945, a nationwide referendum was held regarding Mongolian Independence. According to the information collected by the Central Commission on 21 and 22 October, 97.8 % of those eligible voted in the National Referendum for Independence and all citizens who participated voted unianimously for the MPR to be an Independent Nation State.'

Li Fazhang's delegation 'observed the national referendum process both in the city and the countryside by dividing into two groups on October 20, 1945 under the order of the Government of Republic of China. Today, the head of the Central Commission has reported the outcome of the referendum and we are satisfied with the proceedings. Therefore, we hereby congratulate the leaders and citizens of the Government of Outer Mongolia for succesfully conducting their national referendum.'

This unanimous response shows the pure will and committment of the citizens of the Republic of Mongolia to become an independent nation state. After receiving the official result, the Chiang Kai-shek government approved the independence of MPR on 5 January 1946 and five weeks later, on 13 February, formal diplomatic relations were established.

Tsedendamba Batbayar

Courtesy of the Mongolian National Archives

The independence referendum underway.

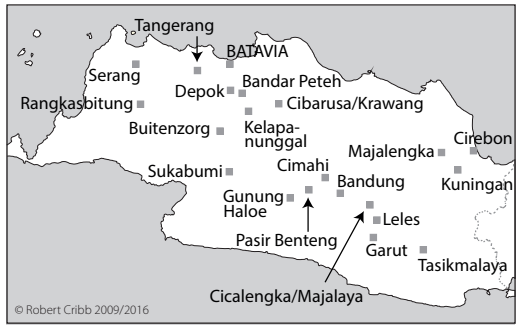
Lao king deposed. After its repeated calls on King Sisavangvong to abdicate are ignored, the Lao Issara national assembly formally deposes the king. However, with Luang Prabang in Chinese hands and disarmed French personnel also in the city, the king and his son, Crown Prince Savangvatthana, remain defiant.

British expand into Central Java. Two days after British forces take control of Bandung and the same day they are confronted with the carnage in Semarang, a detachment of Gurkha troops is despatched to Ambarawa and Magelang in the interior of Central Java (see map p. 283). Their goal is to secure the besieged women's and children's camps there and bring the internees to safety. However, trouble flares almost immediately between locals and Dutch RAPWI staff attached to the force.

Dutch internees

The Netherlands Indies divided its inhabitants into three categories, each with its own laws. On the top were the Europeans: about 100,000 ethnic Dutchmen, called *totoks*, and about 200,000 citizens of mixed blood, called Indo-Europeans or Indos. The second category was filled in by the Foreign Orientals, the great majority of them Chinese. Inter alia, the Japanese government had been strong enough to have their citizens classified as Europeans as early as 1899. The 75 million strong native population comprised the third category; however much the Dutch spoke of lofty ideals, natives were formally and informally discriminated against.

Upon occupying the Indies in 1942, the Japanese retained their 'European' classification even as they worked to exclude Dutch influence from public life. Almost immediately, some 42,000 Dutch members of the colonial army (KNIL) were interned as prisoners of war. The majority of the KNIL's 24,000 indigenous soldiers were soon released, and quite a number signed with Japanese auxiliary forces (the military training of the many Ambonese and Menadonese among them would become significant later, when they started their own separatist movements). The other POWs remained interned or were forced to work as labourers. They worked to construct the infamous Burma Railway at the cost of 3,100 dead, and the lesser-known Trans Sumatra Railway (2,500 dead,



Adapted with thanks from Cribb 2010

Japanese-run internment camps for Europeans in West Java, 1943–45.

Courtesy of Dutch National Archives, Fotocollectie Van de Poll (all 3 photos)

Kampong Makassar was the worst internment camp in the Jakarta area with 10,000 women and children crammed into 1.3 sq. km. of space. Huts were dark and crowded (left). Lack of medical resources hamper efforts to save this dying seven-year-old girl (right).

and another 5,600 drowned when their transport ship was hit by an Allied torpedo). Thus, fully 20 percent of Dutch POWs, 8,200, died under the Japanese occupation. After the war, the survivors were remilitarized by the Dutch administration in its desperate quest for military men to restore Dutch rule.

110,000 Europeans were detained in internment camps, where circumstances gradually deteriorated. Camps became ever more crowded, and hunger and illness were reinforced by violent and humiliating treatment. About 13% died. Outside Java, almost all Europeans were subject to internment. In Java this was impossible to realize, for the sheer number of Indos living there. Thus, maybe around 200,000 Europeans – estimates vary widely – almost all of them Indos, became *buitenkamper*s (people outside the camps), where they were confronted with Japanese suspicions as to their loyalty as well as an often-hostile Indonesian environment.

The Japanese surrender in August 1945 was hardly a festive event for Europeans inside or outside the camps. The Allies were still far away and the Japanese continued their guardianship of the camps, although now polite and reticent. Material circumstances only slowly changed for the better. And a new threat loomed: the Indonesian Republic was proclaimed. Soon its supporters, far more than anticipated by the Dutch former internees, made clear that a return of Dutch rule would be blocked by all means. Dutch former internees quickly sensed the danger from the Indonesians. The first victims fell and the Dutch en masse went back to their camps, now in self-internment.

Such an option was not available for

the *buitenkampers*. Many ran to safety in the former Japanese internment camps in the enclaves occupied by the British troops after October 1945: Jakarta–Bogor–Bandung, Semarang and Surabaya. Most remained in Republican territory and an estimated 50,000 were interned, by force or by choice, by the Republican government. Their repatriation became a long-drawn affair, amidst accusations by the Dutch that the internment was not to safeguard the well-being of the inmates. They were used instead as pawns to be played in the ups and downs of the Dutch–Indonesian conflict. Of course, the Republic denied any such scheme. It took, nonetheless, till far into 1947 before the all internees were repatriated to Dutch-occupied territory.

Courtesy of Dutch National Archives, Fotocollectie Van de Poll

Dutch internees on their way home, boarding the SS *Boschfontein* at the port of Tanjung Priok outside Jakarta, March 1946.

By that time the notorious *bersiap* was over. Starting in October 1945, this was a long-suppressed latent violence that exploded. The *bersiap* was directed at the Dutch, at the Japanese, at the traditional scapegoat the Chinese, and at Indonesians who had worked for the Dutch and Japanese. The terror, killings and mass slaughter soon became indiscriminate. The death toll among Europeans has never been established but estimates are between 4,000 and 20,000. Most discussions centre around European casualties, but *bersiap* also was directed at Chinese and Indonesians, with similar numbers of casualties. It would be enlightening to see *bersiap* in a broader perspective: as a conflict that could have developed into a civil war.

As for the internees and *buitenkampers*, they were destitute in 1945. Many lost relatives and friends, and were themselves physically and mentally afflicted. In a span of ten years almost all of them migrated to the Netherlands, where they were met with a chilly reception, but substantial numbers emigrated to Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The Dutch government with subterfuge and deceit evaded its responsibility for compensation of damages and for back pay. Even today, the rapidly dwindling victims of seventy years ago reiterate their rightful claims, but in vain.

Harry Poeze

RVES IDLE AS DOCK
Men Involved:
o Demands
Official View
Of Situation
U.S. Warships
Coming Here

21 October

Strike in Singapore. 7,000 Singapore Harbour Board workers at Tanjong Pagar put down tools, protesting the high cost of living, demanding higher wages and condemning the shipment of ammunition to Java (apparently to be used against the Indonesian nationalists).

Indonesian communists regroup. Long suppressed by the Dutch and remaining underground during the Japanese occupation, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) is finally re-established. Much of the revolutionary energy and status lies with the *pemuda*, Socialists and other leftist groups, however, and it is to these groups that many veteran communist returnees gravitate.

British aims in Indonesia reiterated. Mountbatten affirms that the principal role of his forces is to accept the Japanese surrender, recover prisoners of war and internees, and maintain law and order. There will be no direct involvement in political issues. At the same time he rectifies Christison's bluntness of the month before (see p. 232) by showing support for Van Mook's conciliatory policy. Negotiations between the Dutch and Republicans will be meaningless, however, if power lies with hundreds of armed local groups rather than a central authority – hence the more vigorous British approach in recent days.

22 October

RESOLOESI NAHDLATOEL
OELAMA
Seloeroeh Djawa/Madoera
Hiami 'Ilahi 'rrahmani
'rrahim.

Jihad declared in East Java. The mass Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama agrees to and issues a major *fatwa*. This declares the fight for Indonesian independence to be a holy war (*jihad fi sabilillah*). The *fatwa* is framed in light of the increasing conflicts in the Surabaya area, and states that participation in the fight is mandatory for all Muslim men within a day's walk of the city. This is the most widely known of the flood of *fatwa* issued in the early revolution.

23 October

Dutch governor meets Indonesian leadership. In his first meeting with Sukarno and Hatta, held in defiance of his government, Van Mook explores the possibilities of a compromise. However, he is hampered by his suspicions of British motives and the intransigence of his political masters; the Dutch government decrees that the meeting never took place. Changing tack, Van Mook then persuades the British to inform the Republican leadership they are bound to respect Dutch sovereignty, a move that dampens Republican enthusiasm for negotiations.

Viet Minh sign accord with nationalist opponents. Under Chinese pressure to allow a greater non-communist presence in his government, Ho Chi Minh signs an accord between the Viet Minh and Vietnamese Revolutionary Alliance (Dong Minh Hoi). In the next two months, three more accords are made with the DMH or Vietnam Nationalist Party (VNQDD), that on 23 December with both parties being the most important. These accords break down after the nationalists launch recruitment drives and both sides vilify each other in the press and their own propaganda.

24 October

Threat of civil war in China. Fo Tso-i, commander of Republican China's 12th military region, cables Mao, accusing the Communist army of attacks on Shanxi and Sui-yuan in the past two months. He warns that further CCP encroachments might lead to civil war, for which the CCP would take full responsibility. Two days later, the CCP's Xinhua News Agency dismisses Fo's statement.

United Nations Charter ratified. The five permanent members of the Security Council (the United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, France and China), along with other 24 non-permanent members, formally ratify the UN Charter. This day is henceforth commemorated as United Nations Day. However, nationalist leaders like Ho Chi Minh, hearing of the speeches delivered on self-determination for colonized peoples, look for more than words.

25 October

Japan surrenders Taiwan. Chen I, newly appointed Garrison Commander and Chief Executive of Taiwan, receives Japan's surrender and formally claims sovereignty over the province. This day comes to be commemorated as Taiwan Retrocession Day.

Formal celebration of the Japanese surrender of Taiwan to China following the ceremony held at the Taipei City Hall.

Cambodian king finally meets British commander. King Sihanouk receives Lt. Col. Murray in audience for the first time. By now, with the king safely under French guidance, there is no suggestion of the British establishing quasi-diplomatic relations with a self-styled independent state.

General Mallaby in discussions with the Japanese.

British forces land in Surabaya and Palembang. Commanded by Brig.-Gen. A.W.S. Mallaby, Indian troops arrive in Surabaya to escort internees to safety. Their job is hampered because the internees are camped on the far side of the city. The same day, British forces enter Palembang as part of the operation to repatriate thousands of Allied POWs and civilian internees from Sumatra. This is achieved over the next few weeks with far less trouble than on Java where, within days of the British arrival, an initially cordial welcome turns hostile largely due to British blunders.

26 October

U.S. demands Philippines remove and punish collaborators. President Truman issues directives that outline U.S. policy in the Philippines. One of these specifically requires the Philippine government to remove collaborators from government and punish them. Meanwhile, President Osmeña, seeking American assurances of rehabilitation assistance, relief and military support, plans a new trip to Washington in November, the third time he will have been to the U.S. in 1945.

27 October

French rule reinstated in Cambodia. In a speech drafted for him by the former French *Résident supérieur*, recently freed from confinement, King Sihanouk welcomes the re-imposition of the French Protectorate.

King Norodom Sihanouk. During 1945, Cambodia gained a quasi-independence only to return to its earlier colonial status. These events gave Cambodia's young king a zest for politics and a sense of mission that remained with him thereafter and had a major impact on the fortunes of his country.

28 October

Heavy fighting in Surabaya. Following British seizure of key installations in the city and an ultimatum that local forces disarm, about 120,000 *pemuda* attack the 4,000 well-armed but scattered Indian sepoys as well as the convoys of internees they are escorting. After an urgent British appeal, Sukarno arrives in the city early in the morning and calms the situation. After negotiations seem to have succeeded, he leaves again. Next day, scattered fighting resumes during which General Mallaby is killed. His death changes British sentiment firmly in favour of the Dutch.

War comes to Surabaya

Two days after the famous 'flag incident' of September 19, when an angry crowd attacked Surabaya's Orange Hotel (see p. 217), British reinforcements retook the hotel and prepared for an Allied landing, while the Japanese began the evacuation of 10,000 troops, leaving armed contingents around the Orange Hotel, munitions warehouses and kampung gates. With Allied peacekeepers yet to land, the Kempeitai presence thin and several of their guards already killed in skirmishes with locals, the fledgling army (BKR, renamed TKR after 5 October) and PRI militia responded quickly, sending instructions into the kampungs for men to mobilize and support the takeover of Japanese installations in the city. Between 29 September and 2 October, several thousand untrained kampung militia supported BKR and PRI units in taking over the remaining armouries, the motorpool, the military hospital, the radio station and the heavily guarded Kempeitai headquarters. Surabaya's combatants had come of age: hesitant and with few guns in mid-September, they had by the first week of October defeated the Japanese and seized armoured vehicles, trucks, jeeps and over 30,000 light and heavy weapons, or approximately half the remaining Japanese arsenal in Java.

By 13 October, a renegade *pemuda* leader later known affectionately as Bung Tomo established a radio station that broadcast calls for people to kill the Dutch and prepare to fight the Allies. Concerned that anti-Dutch violence would erupt and

The *pemuda* leader Sutomo (also known as Bung Tomo) played a central role in the Battle of Surabaya, galvanizing Indonesian resistance to the incoming British and Dutch with powerful oratory.

© Imperial War Museums (SE 5724)

The burnt-out car of General Mallaby, in which he was killed in Surabaya on 30 October 1945.

the brittle state of order so far maintained would collapse, TKR and PRI leaders sent guards to Dutch suburbs to safeguard the inhabitants and transfer the most vulnerable to the ironic safety of the city's prisons (PRI is shorthand for Pemuda Rakyat Indonesia, or Indonesian Republican Youth). On 15 October, or what is known by its survivors as 'Bloody Monday', the safeguarding failed – firstly when an angry mob clubbed and hacked to death around 50 Dutch and Eurasians and wounded a few hundred more as their PRI guards lead them through the gates of Kalisosok prison and, secondly, when interrogators allowed the butchering of up to 200 of the 1,000 or more people being held at PRI headquarters. Desperate to restore order before facing the Allies in the coming fortnight, the TKR and PRI built a sketchy inventory of the weapons held by kampung men, identified kampung militia leaders, established lines of command with them and instructed them to prepare for pending conflict.

On the afternoon of 25 October, British-Indian soldiers of Brigadier-General Mallaby's 4,000-man 49th Brigade entered the city from its northern-most point at the harbour and within 48 hours had secured areas as far south as the Ngagel Industrial Estate and the Darmo garden suburb before their small and dispersed units were swiftly overrun by Indonesians armed with weapons ranging from bamboo spears and Molotov

cocktails to pistols and semi-automatic machine guns. Numbering around 100,000 men, the Indonesians were spurred on by the folly of Jakarta-based General Hawthorne, who on 27 October organized an air drop of leaflets demanding the disarmament of Surabaya's forces, a demand that contravened Mallaby's assurances the day before that the republicans could keep their weapons and that British-Indian troops would stay within an 800-metre perimeter of the harbour. President Sukarno, Vice President Hatta and Defence Minister Sjarrafudin flew to Surabaya on 29 October and brokered an uneasy ceasefire the next day, but it was violated within hours, Mallaby killed and the remaining 49th Brigade sent scrambling for the safety of the harbour.

The victory was short-lived as the vengeful 5th Indian and 23rd Indian Divisions arrived on 4 November and, over the next five days, fully deployed their combined force of 30,000 men backed by 24 tanks, 5 warships and 24 fighter planes. By midday on 9 November, the ultimatum of their commander, General Robert Mansergh, was air-dropped over the city, instructing that a full-scale assault would begin the next morning if Indonesian forces did not surrender. Throughout the next day, tanks followed by rifle-ready soldiers moved through the streets, hundreds of bombs gutted kampungs, and low-flying fighter planes peppered the city with bullets. In the sixteen days it took the 5th Indian Division to reach the southern gate of the city at Wonokromo, the city's population had dropped by 90 per cent as civilians fled in the thousands each day for the safety of the hinterland or were killed in the crossfire. The republican fighters, including many nurses, who rushed past them and into the city from the south, and the combatants they came to support, suffered a heavy toll of several thousand dead and twice as many wounded. Depopulated and gutted, Surabaya was the only major Southeast Asian city other than Manila to suffer significant damage during WWII, a scale of carnage that marked the first and most punitive stage of Indonesia's four-year independence struggle.

Robbie Peters

29 October

Trouble in Makassar. Militant youth attack Dutch positions in Makassar and seize control of a radio station. They are then driven off by Australian troops, who kill some and arrest others.

30 October

Struggle for Manchuria intensifies. After being blocked from entering Manchurian ports, finally Chinese government troops are landed by the U.S. fleet at Chinwangtao from where they subsequently fight their way north. Next day, Lin Piao is ordered to reorganize all Communist forces in Manchuria into a Northeastern People's Autonomous Army. Both sides strive to strengthen their position in Manchuria in the lull before the resumption of all-out civil war.

Courtesy of U.S. National Archives, FOS011

After being denied entry to Port Arthur, troops of the 13th Nationalist Army disembark from the USS *Cullman* in Chinwangtao.

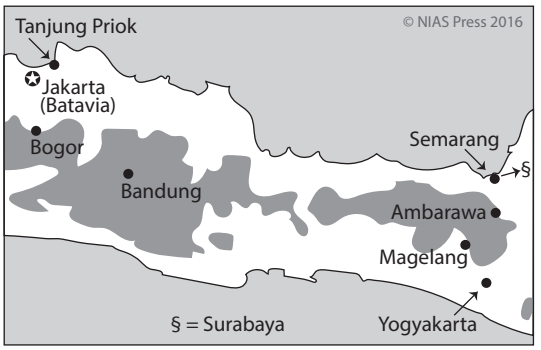
Lao leadership consolidates resistance forces. Although local Lao Issara activists are gaining ground in some areas, often with Viet Minh support, elsewhere Franco–Lao forces are successful. Moreover, the French have now re-established themselves in Cochinchina and Cambodia. As part of a military agreement between Lao Issara and Viet Minh, Prince Phetsarath now agrees to an enlarged defence force that integrates Prince Souphanouvong's Committee of Independent Laos with the Lao Issara Army. The new army will be commanded by Souphanouvong.

Conflict spreads in Central Java. When news of the situation in Surabaya is received, fighting breaks out in Semarang and quickly spreads to Magelang, where only British air attacks save the beleaguered Gurkha force. Again, Sukarno is asked to intervene. Next day he makes a radio appeal for all fighting against the British to cease; the Republic cannot withstand the power of all the Allies. On the 1st he flies to Semarang, then proceeds to Yogyakarta via Magelang after failing to arrange a truce. An agreement made next day lasts until the 10th when news arrives from Surabaya of fierce fighting there.

31 October

Negotiations continue in Chungking. Even as a serious conflict looms in Manchuria, KMT and CCP negotiators continue to seek a political settlement. Hopes are raised when the Nationalist government responds to CCP proposals by agreeing to a ceasefire, discussion of a reorganization of military forces, and convening a political consultative conference as planned.

CCP delegates at the Chungking negotiations following the departure of Mao Tse-tung on 11 October. Leading the team is Chou En-lai (third from left).



Central Java.

French high commissioner reaches Indochina. On the same day that more French reinforcements disembark in Saigon, Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu arrives in the city and assumes formal leadership of the French administration. En route to Indochina, he has stopped over at SEAC headquarters in Kandy, lobbying for inclusion of Cambodia's lost province of Battambang within General Gracey's southern Indochina command area. He is unsuccessful; Battambang will remain part of the separate British remit in Thailand.

Admiral Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu, High Commissioner for French Indochina was a controversial figure who played a major part in the outbreak of the First Indochina War.

1 November

Controversy over Japanese constitutional revision. The Constitutional Problems Investigation Committee, established by the Shidehara cabinet and led by Matsumoto Jōji (see p. 243), is now given exclusive authority over constitutional issues. This follows criticism of Konoe Fumimaro's role in the constitutional process. Since meeting with MacArthur on 4 October in his role as acting Minister of State, Konoe has been working on revisions. With the fall of the Higashikuni cabinet, he is also Lord of the Privy Council. Due to his involvement in wartime politics, however, his role in the constitutional revision has been criticized both in Japan and abroad. Even MacArthur now distances himself from Konoe, and GHQ denies giving him any endorsement to work on the constitutional revision.

AFPFL breaks with British administration. Rejecting the AFPFL push for a dominant role in the post-war governance of Burma, Governor Dorman-Smith forms an Executive Council that excludes the AFPFL and only includes 'loyal' prewar politicians. He is determined not to depart from the White Paper and not to continue Mountbatten's 'appeasement' approach towards Aung San and the AFPFL. Aung San soon responds, calling on the Burmese to emulate India's struggle for independence. Later in the month, he forms a private militia, the People's Volunteer Organization, with thousands of discharged PBF soldiers and former resistance fighters. With the PVO at his command, he is now able to threaten the British with an armed struggle.

Courtesy of Tran Van Dinh

Viet Minh and Laotian officials on 1 November 1945, reviewing a parade of troops of the Chinese Nationalist 93rd Division in Vientiane. Prince Souphanouvong, commander in chief, Lao Issara forces, is in uniform in the front row, next to his young son, Ariya.

A sense of frustration: the return of Governor Dorman-Smith

Before the British civil administration and Governor Dorman-Smith returned to Burma in mid-October 1945, Dorman-Smith made it very clear that his administration would strictly adhere to the policy set in the White Paper for rebuilding the war-torn country. He would not continue the 'appeasement' policy of Admiral Mountbatten towards Aung San and the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. Indeed, the two most powerful British officials in post-war Burma could not have been more different in their approach to the growing nationalist movement.

Admiral Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander of the South East Asia Command, was a sober realist. He was aware that World War II had changed the global political landscape; that the era of colonialism was coming to an end. He was confident that Burmese nationalists like Aung San, who cooperated with the Japanese but later joined the Allies, would eventually become national heroes. In defence of his accommodating policy, he declared that he preferred to make it possible for these nationalists 'to be national heroes with the British rather than against them.' In fact, he already envisioned Burma as a dominion in the Commonwealth. Governor Dorman-Smith, however, was not ready to accept the postwar situation from such a pragmatic point of view. He had experienced the humiliation of 1942, when his government fled from the invading Japanese army and Aung San's troops. He was determined not to recognize the new political elite that had emerged during the Japanese occupation.

Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith

In October 1945, London expected Dorman-Smith to form an Executive Council that represented all major political forces in the country. Thus, he grudgingly met with Aung San and other AFPFL representatives for talks. However, he showed no interest when Aung San demanded that the AFPFL, as the only representative national organization in Burma, should get eleven out of fifteen councillor seats. He remained uncompromising even when Aung San showed readiness to accommodate. When the AFPFL decided not to return to the negotiating table, Dorman-Smith expressed his satisfaction that Aung San's 'willing cooperation' was short-lived. On 1 November, he formed an Executive Council with pre-war politicians he described as 'loyal'.

After the failed negotiations, the AFPFL prepared for confrontation. In short order, it increased its power base and ever more groups joined the organization,

including thousands of troops of the People's Volunteer Organization, a militia formed by Aung San. The governor and his staff, meanwhile, got more out of touch with the political reality on the ground. Memos to London described the AFPFL as an organization that was losing its national significance. Oddly enough, Dorman-Smith saw Aung San as 'a tired and deflated little man' who had reached a position that was beyond him.

Aung San would later describe this as a time of frustration, a feeling that Mountbatten shared. The Supreme Allied Commander was following the developments in Burma from his headquarters in Singapore with great concern. He had warned Dorman-Smith before his return in September that political concessions to the nationalist forces had to be made in order to avoid an escalation of hostilities. He blamed the governor's failure to include the AFPFL in the Executive Council for the growing tensions in the country. He eventually lost all trust in the judgement of Dorman-Smith who, a few months later, tried to arrest Aung San on murder charges. That was when Mountbatten made it clear that the governor could not expect any military support should an armed insurrection arise.

In June 1946, London recalled Dorman-Smith. His policy had failed and brought Burma closer to chaos. Attlee sent a new governor, Hubert Rance, personally recommended by Mountbatten. Rance swiftly included Aung San and the AFPFL in the Executive Council, thus paving the way for the final negotiations for Burma's independence. At last, Mountbatten's policy prevailed. However, his vision of Burma as a dominion within the Commonwealth was never realized. Shortly before he was assassinated in 1947, Aung San with his colleagues in the AFPFL decided to seek full independence for Burma.

Susanne Prager-Nyein

See also Prager-Nyein 2007, Tinker (ed.) 1983.

U Saw: An enigma in East Africa

The closing months of war in Burma have witnessed East and West African soldiers fighting with great valour under British command, earning them the respect of their European and Asian comrades-in-arms and a place in the nightmares of the surviving Japanese enemy. But Africa holds a bigger enigma for Burma than these hitherto-unknown fighters. Back when the War began, the British government detained Saw (more popularly known as 'U Saw'

U Saw

or his *nom de guerre*, 'Galon U Saw,' in honour of the anti-British rebel Saya San), the most successful politician under Burma's 1935 Constitution, in Uganda, where he has languished in prison ever since. Acting as if he were the head of state of an independent nation, he had attempted to negotiate secretly with the Japanese while on an overseas trip after receiving scant encouragement on his proposals for Burma's self-rule from either Prime Minister Churchill or President Roosevelt.

Saw will likely return from Uganda to his homeland soon, anxious to re-enter the fray after four years of twiddling his thumbs in jail. We can only wonder: will his return trouble this already much-troubled land, or will he act responsibly in cooperation with British authorities and Burma's other political forces to bring a peaceful resolution to the issue of the country's future? Given the man's towering self-regard and violent ambition, we can only imagine that the former is more likely to be the case than the latter.

Saw faces the predicament of the ham that has been kept too long in the smokehouse. Others have stepped into the centre of the political stage, eclipsing his pre-war popularity, especially 'Bogyoke' Aung San, his bitter rival since the late 1930s. After turning against his Japanese allies at the last conceivable moment, Aung San charmed Lord Louis Mountbatten, head of the South-East Asian Command, and has dodged charges of collaboration by convincing much of the public that he is battling *both* (Japanese) fascism and (British) colonialism, all summed up in the name of his broad leftist coalition: the 'Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League'.

U Saw, a consummate politician, combines the talents of the rabble-rouser (for example when used his newspaper, *The Sun*, to provoke the Burman masses against the Indian migrants, especially Muslims, during the 1938 riots) with those of the backroom dealer (lining up financial support from wealthy Burman landowners and entrepreneurs as well as major funding from the Japanese). The ace up his sleeve, however, is the esteem with which conservative Brits view him, a 'loveable rascal' who presses them – especially Governor Dorman-Smith – with expensive whiskey and well-aimed flattery. The old colonialists both fear and despise Aung San, and nothing would suit them better than using Saw to oust the 'Bogyoke' from his high perch on the platform of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda (where he is in the habit of giving speeches).

Key to Saw's future success is his old chum, Dorman-Smith. If the Governor can make the proposals outlined in the Conservatives' White Paper stick, he and Saw could form a partnership to assure that Burma will maintain pro-business policies not much different from those of the colonial era. This arrangement would be very good for Saw, but whether it is good for Burma is quite another matter.

Donald M. Seekins

3 November

Call for political parties in Indonesia. Vice President Hatta issues a decree allowing the formation of political parties, a natural consequence of the move towards a parliamentary system initiated in October. The text states that a range of parties will better represent the desires of different groups in the Indonesian population. The decree comes after several groups have already called meetings to establish parties.

New Korean rightist party challenges Soviets. Although still nominally head of the Soviet-backed Five-Province Administrative Bureau, Cho Mansik is increasingly at odds with the Soviet authorities. Backed by the hugely influential Christian community and propertied classes in northern Korea, the right-leaning Protestant leader founds the Democratic Party of Korea. This enjoys initial widespread popular support.

4 November

Last push for Mongol unification. Top leaders from eastern Inner Mongolia and Hulunbuir region visit Ulaanbaatar and reiterate their wish to join the Mongolian People's Republic. They submit a petition signed by tens of thousands of Inner Mongols who want their land to be unified with the MPR. Three days later ,these leaders meet Choibalsan in person and ask for assistance in building up the eastern Mongolian government.

Siam takes covert action against the French. By order of Regent Pridi Phanomyong, the abundant supply of Allied weaponry held by the now-disbanded Seri Thai movement is to be siphoned off to help Indochinese nationalist groups in their struggle to end French colonial rule. Support is not just for the Lao Issara but also the Viet Minh.

Overthrow of royal power enforced in Laos. Despite the presence of Chinese occupation forces in the city, a small force of local officials and Lao Issara troops seizes control of the royal armoury and royal treasury in Luang Prabang, thus enforcing the ousting of the king and transfer of central authority from Luang Prabang to Vientiane. The Lao Issara government follows up on the 10th by formally deposing Prince Savangvatthana as crown prince. The loss of face suffered by the royal family embitters relations and has long-lasting effects in subsequent decades.

King Sisavangvong and Prince Savangvatthana

Thailand's support for anti-colonial movements

As an independent nation-state, Thailand's experience with the acceleration of decolonization during WWII was different from its neighbours. Under the monarchy, Thai foreign policy welcomed both the British in Burma and the French in Vietnam, which neutralized two long-standing threats to Thai security and hegemony. The situation changed during the 1930s, however, as both France and Britain went into decline, while Japanese influence in Southeast Asia rapidly increased. Beginning in the early 1940s, the Thai government looked for opportunities to support anti-colonial groups operating in mainland Southeast Asia. They did so for a variety of reasons. As members of Japan's Co-Prosperity sphere, Thai leaders claimed it was their duty to support the independence aspirations of 'Fellow-Asians'. This newfound sense of racial solidarity coincided nicely with the Thailand's desire to bleed the western powers that had limited its own imperialist ambitions over the previous half century. By supporting anti-western movements during and after WWII, Bangkok hoped to project its own influence into the vacuum created by European decline.

Even before the war, Thailand's military regime worked to facilitate the departure of European imperialism – starting with Burma. As early as 1939, British envoy Sir Josiah Crosby reported that key members of the Thai government were shipping weapons to rebels in Burma by way of Thai students at Rangoon University. Bangkok also assisted in the training of Ang Sang's 'Thirty Comrades,' and the formation of the Burmese Independent Army, an anti-British militia that crossed from Thailand into Burma in 1941. Thailand's northern 'Phayap' army would fol-

low in March 1942, invading the Shan States and conquering the city of Keng Tung. Later that year, Thailand officially annexed the region so that its 'Thai' inhabitants could be freed from colonial oppression.

The Thai state provided similar encouragement to the Indian independence movement. In 1941, Bangkok's Indian community formed the Indian National Council (INC), an organization dedicated to the realization of self-government in India. The next year, Thai Deputy Foreign Minister Wichit Wathakan attended the INC's Bangkok Conference to decide the organization's leadership and platform. The Indian National Army (INA), a militia founded to cooperate with Japan in the liberation of India, had a training camp southeast of Bangkok near the city of Chon Buri. Thailand served as a supply center for the INA during the ill-fated Imphal campaign, and the Phibun government assisted the evacuation of Indian troops from Burma. Bangkok allowed the INC to broadcast 'The Voice of Free India' over its air waves, giving Indian nationalists a media platform in Southeast Asia to counter the pro-British propaganda coming from Delhi.

Thailand's most significant contribution to the decolonization movement came through its support of Indochinese independence. During WWII, the Allies secretly shipped weapons and supplies into Thailand to support the formation of an anti-Japanese resistance group known as the Seri Thai. The abrupt ending of the war left this group in possession of a sizable cache of weapons, augmented by those discarded by departing Japanese forces. The leader of the Seri Thai, Pridi Phanomyong, began to funnel these munitions into the hands of the guerilla movements in French Indochina. In particular, the Viet Minh had many contacts with former Seri Thai members who now occupied important leadership positions in the Thai government, navy and police, and frequently traveled to Bangkok to purchase weapons. In the eastern provinces, the prominent Aphaiwongse family ran a lucrative business supplying the Viet Minh with rifles, machine guns and anti-aircraft guns. Public sentiment in Thailand was very sympathetic to the independence movement in Indochina. The governor of Nong Khai province harbored Lao Issara leader Prince Souphanowong after the Prince crossed the Mekong to avoid capture by French police. In Roi-Et province, clandestine groups used Buddhist temples as donation centers to raise money for the Free Lao movement.

After the war, the normalization of Thai relations with Britain and France brought an end to its backing of anti-colonial groups. The return of Phibun Songkhram as Prime Minister in 1948, now a committed Cold Warrior, would bring Thailand to fight the very independence movements it had once supported.

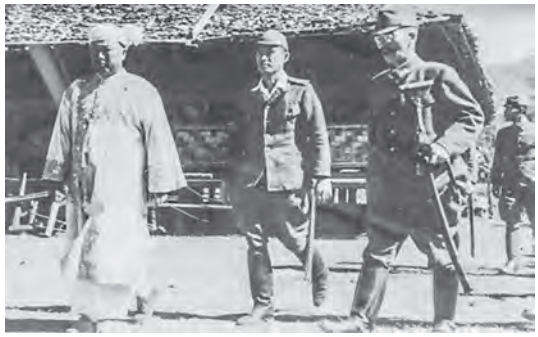
Shane Strate

6 November

Japanese *zaibatsu* monopolies dissolved. Recognizing the important role they played in Japan's war effort, General MacArthur orders that all 17 of Japan's vertically integrated corporations dissolve their structures. This is the first antitrust law in Japan's history.

One of the big four *zaibatsu* targeted for dissolution was Mitsubishi, which had its roots in the time of the Meiji Restoration and, like the other conglomerates, was controlled by a single family (pictured above). Although the 'old' *zaibatsu* argued that the newer conglomerates were most complicit in and had profited from Japanese militarism, they too were heavily involved – for instance, Mitsubishi had close links to the Imperial Navy and manufactured Japan's famed Zero fighter plane.

Shan States seek independence. With some of their states newly liberated from Thai rule, the Shan *sawbwa*s (princes) send a message to London reminding the British of their past loyalty and material support and calling for self-government (dominion status) for the 43 Shan States in the same way as being discussed for Burma, India, Ceylon and Malaya. They also propose amalgamating the 43 states into 12 and having one *sawbwa* lead them all.



Whether or not they felt loyal to the British, the wartime reality for the Shan princes was dealing with their Thai and Japanese masters.

Massacre at Padang Lebar. Early in the morning, a group of Malays kill 40 Chinese men, women and children at this small settlement outside of Kuala Pilah, Negri Sembilan. Seventeen are later arrested in connection to the massacre. This is only the most horrific episode of inter-ethnic violence in the region, which had been escalating throughout October and November. MPAJA and BMA troops are posted to the region to protect civilians. The Malayan Communist Party also decides to moderate its approach toward Malays.

7 November

Political parties forming in Indonesia. The Islamic political party Masjumi is founded at a conference in Yogyakarta. Most delegates are from Java, but the aim is a unitary Islamic party for the whole country. The event is significant because of Masjumi's popularity in the coming decade and a half and because of strong Muslim support for the independence movement that it represents. Five days later, the first congress is held of the Socialist Party (Parsi) under Amir Sjarifuddin, which had already been founded on the 1st. Other political parties are also quickly formed.

Communists call for Malayan self-rule. The Malayan Communist Party issues a statement calling on the British Military Administration to introduce self-rule, something it had not called for in August. The party further requests that the BMA loosen restrictions on speech and assembly and that it increase wages.

© Imperial War Museums (SE 5865)

An Indian soldier uses a knocked out Indonesian nationalist tank as cover in a main street in Surabaya during the fighting (see opposite).

9 November

Draft Vietnamese constitution publicized. The DRV provisional government releases the text of a draft constitution, which is promptly serialized in a number of newspapers. Citizens are encouraged to send proposed constitutional amendments to the Justice Ministry.

British vengeance in Surabaya. During a week of relative quiet in Surabaya following Sukarno's peace broadcast, up to 8,000 internees are successfully evacuated. Once completed, the British seek revenge for Mallaby's killing. All women and children are warned to leave the city by evening and an impossible ultimatum in leaflets dropped from the air demands all arms are handed in by dawn and Mallaby's killers handed over. With the Republican government dithering, the local authorities reject the ultimatum.

10 November

Battle of Surabaya erupts. With local leaders rejecting the previous day's British ultimatum, British forces attack early next morning, their troops backed by tanks and by aerial and naval bombardment. Three weeks of savage fighting pass before the city falls. Though a crushing military defeat for Republican forces, it is a strategic and political victory as the British realize they are unable to repeat such feats across the entire country.

Courtesy of Dutch National Archives, Fotocollectie Anefo

British troops advancing in Surabaya.

11 November

Korean nationalist leader steps down. Finding himself increasingly marginalized within the People's Republic and tacitly accepting General Hodge's demand that the KPR reorganize itself as a political party, Yŏ Unhyŏng resigns his KPR positions. He then establishes the People's Party, a moderate but short-lived left-wing political party. Yŏ's departure effectively leaves the communists in control of the KPR but sidelined by the U.S. military government, which rejects its leftist agenda.

Although Yŏ Unhyŏng continued to be involved in his country's affairs (as in this May 1946 meeting with Soviet representatives), he became a more marginal actor; the future lay with Kim Il-sung and Syngman Rhee (see p. 250). Assassinated in 1947, Yŏ is rare among politicians in modern Korean history in that he is revered in both South and North Korea.

Indochinese Communist Party dissolved. Ho Chi Minh has been under growing pressure from Chinese generals to accept members of the Nationalist Party and Revolutionary League into his government, and an accord in late October between the Viet Minh and two northern nationalist parties (see p. 276) has not been enough; nationalist criticism remains intense. In a move designed to allay American, Chinese and also domestic fears of a communist takeover in Vietnam, Ho calls together a meeting of the ICP and instructs its leaders to announce voluntary dissolution of the party. Vietnam's opportunity to gain complete independence should not be jeopardized by differences of class or political party, the closing resolution declares. In reality, the ICP returns to operate in the shadows, though now protected rather than hounded by the police. The dissolution of the party nonetheless raises doubts among French, Chinese and especially Soviet communists as to the ideological commitment of the ICP in general and the ideological mettle of Ho Chi Minh in particular.

12 November

Sudirman elected Indonesian army commander. Despite the creation of a formal army, the TKR, on 5 October, defence of the new Indonesian Republic is still highly decentralized. Local commanders are negotiating with Japanese forces and assessing local vulnerabilities and opportunities without reference to any central authority. Finally, regional commanders meet in Yogyakarta and elect the commander from Banyumas Regency, a former auxiliary commander under the Japanese called Sudirman, choosing him in preference to Oerip Sumohardjo (see p. 138). The election marks a shift in Republican policy towards more forceful military resistance, as Sudirman immediately orders an assault on British and Dutch forces in Ambarawa that leads to their withdrawal.

Forced to withdraw from Ambarawa and facing fierce resistance in Surabaya, the British began to rethink their involvement in Indonesia.

Today we are gathered here in Urakami to mark the anniversary of an event which startled the world into the realization that the waging of war can lead only to the ultimate ruination of the human race. That event three years ago today served notice on the then warring Japanese nation, as well as the rest of the world, that with the possession by man of such an all-destructive weapon as atomic energy the waging of war itself is a useless thing indeed. It proved the age-old contention that war does nothing to solve the problems of man but rather increases his misery and suffering, and degrades his culture.

It is the sacred duty of the citizens of Nagasaki to mark this occasion well, as they are doing here today. It is your important duty indeed to serve notice on an uneasy world to mark well the death toll of the Atomic Bomb. Let the living of Nagasaki promise the deceased that they shall not have died in vain as long as their memory can be brought before the eyes of civilized men. All of us throughout the world should pray that such an event shall never occur again in human events. The American people join with the people of Japan and Nagasaki City in this hope.

Lt. Col. Victor Delnore, 9 August 1948

Three years after the city's destruction, Nagasaki in 1948 was still largely in ruins.

Aftermath

On 13 November 1945, 100 tumultuous days had passed since the dropping of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima. One thousand days later, on 9 August 1948, the forces that had been set in train by Japan's defeat and surrender continued to shape the face of Asia.

On 9 August 1948, the first ceremony took place in Nagasaki to commemorate the dropping of the world's second atomic bomb exactly three years earlier. Japanese people in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and elsewhere had previously gathered to commemorate the destruction caused by the bombs. The Nagasaki commemoration in 1948, however, was the first to be authorized by the American occupation authorities. Colonel Victor Delnore, commander of the American occupation forces in the city, addressed the ceremony, telling the audience that the bomb had brought home to all the fact that war caused only 'misery and suffering'. From the suffering of the victims, he said, would come a new desire for peace. He promised the partnership of the American people with the Japanese in that aspiration.

In June 1949, ten months after the first commemoration of the atomic bombing, another memorial service was held in Nagasaki – this time in the ruins of its cathedral – celebrating the 400th anniversary of the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in Japan. The event was a potent reminder of the city's long history as a significant Japanese Christian centre.

Delnore's message reflected a deep transformation that was under way in the United States policy towards Japan. When General Douglas MacArthur arrived in Tokyo as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, American intentions had been to consolidate victory over Japan and to ensure that the country would never again be a military threat by disempowering the old militarist elites and dismantling Japan's industrial capacity. The Occupation took immediate steps to begin a program of democratization and social reform, with the clear intention that democratic Japan would not become a great power. In consultation with anti-militarist forces within Japan, the United

States sponsored a new constitution under which Japan renounced its sovereign right to wage war. By 1948, however, U.S. strategic planners had put the Second World War behind them and saw Japan increasingly as a Cold War ally. Under what was known as the 'reverse course', the occupation authorities ended their attempt to dismantle Japan's industrial capacity and reversed the extensive purges of politicians and officials associated with the wartime regime.

Four months before 9 August 1948, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, set up to try Japan's military, political and diplomatic leaders for war crimes and crimes against peace, had finished hearing all evidence and retired to consider its verdict. Its judgment, released on 12 November 1948, sentenced the wartime prime minister Tōjō Hideki and six others to death, but the occupation authorities had already decided not to proceed with further trials. The hope of several of the Western allies that Japan would be required to pay financial reparations for the wartime damage it had inflicted also began to fade as the U.S. put increasing emphasis on Japan's economic recovery.

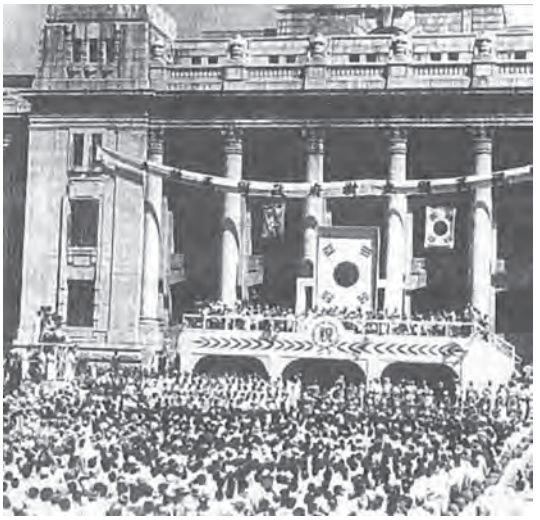
Courtesy of U.S. National Archives

International Military Tribunal for the Far East, May 1946.

Conditions in Japan the immediately after the surrender had been very difficult. Food was in short supply, malnutrition was rife and basic goods were hard to get. By 1948, conditions was somewhat better, but Japanese society had had to absorb millions of returnees from its wartime colonial empire. Around 6.6 million Japanese had been living outside Japan at the time of the surrender, with military personnel and civilians in roughly equal numbers. Military repatriation was largely complete by early 1948 and most civilians had returned by the end of the following year.

The peace treaty to end the war formally would not be signed until April 1952, but already Japan had lost control of all territories it had acquired after 1873. Not only did it lose the territories it had conquered and occupied after 1931, but it also surrendered authority over its older colonies of Korea, Taiwan and Sakhalin. In addition, Okinawa and the Ryukyu archipelago came under long-term U.S. occupation and reverted to Japan only in 1972. The status of Japan's authority over several small islands remained uncertain.

Across the strait in Korea, preparations were under way in Seoul for the declaration of a new state, the Republic of Korea (ROK), on 15 August 1948. This state, headed by the elderly nationalist Syngman Rhee, controlled only the southern half of the Korean peninsula. This zone had been allocated to U.S. forces at the end of the war for the purpose of accepting the Jap-



Official ceremony marking the founding of the Republic of Korea, August 1948.

anese surrender, whereas the north had been assigned to Soviet forces. Neither occupying power had intended at first for Korea to be divided. Rather, they each hoped to have predominant influence over the peninsula as a whole. Gradually, however, the two zones consolidated into separate administrations, with each occupying power sponsoring politicians who were willing to align with its interests. In April 1948, forces in the south brutally suppressed a left-wing movement on the island of Cheju. Forces in the north targeted landlords and other social groups considered to be conservative. Three weeks after the founding of the ROK, on 9 September 1948, Soviet forces sponsored the foundation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the North, with its capital in Pyongyang. Like Rhee, DPRK leader Kim Il-sung had spent years in exile. With Soviet support, however, he was able to gain ascendance over other leftist leaders. By 1949, he had begun to develop a cult of personality, calling himself the 'Great Leader'. Both republics claimed sovereignty over the entire Korean peninsula and, as their respective sponsoring forces, the U.S. and the USSR, withdrew their troops, each side began to fear that the other would attempt to seize the remainder of the peninsula by armed force. Escalating mistrust would lead to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

By August 1948, Korea's Manchurian hinterland was largely in the hands of the Chinese communists, with only three cities – Mukden (Shenyang), Changchun and Chinchou (Jinzhou) – held by forces of the Chinese government under KMT leader Chiang Kai-shek. Japan's client state of Manchukuo had collapsed in 1945 and its territory had been occupied by Soviet forces. Both the KMT forces and those of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had sought to establish control over the region. Officially the Soviet Union recognized the KMT government, but on the ground Soviet forces often gave support to the Communists. The CCP forces were able to control most of the countryside by May 1946 when Soviet forces withdrew, taking with them much equipment from Japanese factories. The Soviets retained control of Port Arthur and Dairen, which imperial Russia had previously been forced to surrender to Japan in 1905.

More than 1.5 million Japanese had been living in Manchuria in August 1945. Only a few could escape to Japan ahead of the Soviet occupation. The remainder lived in refugee camps in cities and towns

Japanese settlers returning from Manchuria and Korea. Many would end up stranded in relocation centres.

along the railway lines. Food was short, many children died of malnutrition and countless women were raped by Soviet soldiers. About 179,000 Japanese civilians in Manchuria died before repatriation to Japan was competed in 1948.

To the west, the Mongolian People's Republic remained firmly within the Soviet camp. Mongolian forces had fought the Japanese army only for brief periods – at Khalkhin-Gol in 1939 and again in Manchuria in August 1945 – but the war years had been difficult for the Mongolian economy as the Soviets diverted resources to the war effort in Europe. After the war, however, the Soviet economy had begun to recover and assistance to the Mongolian authorities began to flow once again. In 1948 the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party thus launched an ambitious five-year plan to expand both herding and industry. Although nominally independent, the MPR under Choibalsan was closely integrated in Soviet military and economic policies. The international standing of the communist regime became more secure in January 1946, after China's KMT government recognized Mongolian sovereignty in Outer Mongolia in exchange for a Soviet promise to acknowledge Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang. This arrangement consolidated the MPR's independent status, but at the cost of entrenching the division between Inner and Outer Mongolia. The MPR nonetheless was unable to obtain membership of the United Nations because its application was blocked by China after border clashes between Mongolian and Chinese forces between June 1947 and July 1948.

In August 1948, the leading cadres of the Chinese Communist Party in Inner Mongolia were meeting in distant Harbin to respond to a political crisis. In the aftermath of Japan's defeat, the CCP had mobilized effectively to win the allegiance of many Inner Mongols by stressing its commitment to Mongol autonomy. This policy set the Communists apart from the assimilationist KMT. In May 1947, the CCP had announced the creation of an Inner Mongolian Autonomous Government covering large areas of eastern Inner Mongolia and Hulunbuir. Communist land reform programmes, however, favoured Chinese cultivators over Mongol landowners and soon led to resentment. Stringent policies against 'herdlords', that is Mongols owning large numbers of livestock, led to the wholesale slaughter of animals and a drastic reduction in the number of livestock in Inner Mongolia. The cadres meeting in Harbin agreed that Inner Mongolia would henceforth be treated differently from the rest of China,

George C. Marshall was a successful U.S. general whose name graced the plan that rebuilt Europe's shattered economies. But Marshall's peace mission in China from December 1945 failed to avert the outbreak of full-scale civil war in mid-1946.

and the separate character of Mongol society would be allowed to continue.

By August 1948 much of northern China was also in CCP hands or contested by communist guerrilla forces. CCP forces were also active in the mountains of the far south, while the northwest was dominated by warlords of the Ma family, who offered only vague loyalty to the KMT. Civil war between the KMT and the CCP had broken out in earnest in July 1946, following the failure of a U.S. mission to the country under General George C. Marshall in late 1945. Marshall had sought to develop an economic and political model for post-war reconstruction and attempted to broker an agreement between the rival Chinese forces but was unsuccessful. The KMT insisted on first nationalizing the army, which would have reduced the CCP's capacity to fight, whereas the CCP insisted that political reform should come first. Although the KMT government conducted numerous trials of Chinese accused of collaborating with Japanese authorities during the war, the KMT itself received significant assistance in its struggle against the communists from Japanese officers and troops who stayed behind in China after the surrender. In April 1948, the National Assembly in Nanking re-elected Chiang Kai-shek as Chinese president, but the generalissimo's power, even within the KMT, rested on an increasingly narrow base. Despite substantial U.S. military aid for the ROC, there were growing doubts as to whether the KMT could ever restore its authority over the whole of China. The KMT regime was widely seen as immensely corrupt, while its careless management of the economy led to runaway inflation that eroded its support among the middle classes who might have been its natural constituency. The costs of fighting the civil war consumed around 80% of the state

The savage suppression of the '228' (28 February) uprising on Taiwan has never been forgotten.

budget, leaving little money for services or other benefits to the community.

Increasingly, from 1947, the KMT had begun to use the island of Taiwan as a relatively secure base. The administration of the island was in the hands of mainlanders, rather than Taiwanese, and resentment of what was seen as high-handed and incompetent administration led to a major uprising on 28 February 1947. The rebellion was brutally suppressed, an estimated 18,000–30,000 rebels being killed. In late 1948, the fall of the last KMT strongholds in Manchuria precipitated a rapid collapse of ROC resistance to the communists on the mainland. By mid-1949, the CCP was in control of most of the country; on 1 October 1949, CCP leader Mao Tse-tung addressed a crowd in Tiananmen Square in Peking to declare the People's Republic of China. During the final months of 1949, Chiang and around two million mainlanders retreated to Taiwan, though Chiang still claimed to be president of the whole of China.

Whereas the future for the Chinese communists appeared promising in August 1948, the Vietnamese communists were on the defensive. Three years earlier, conditions had seemed to favour them. The nationalist-communist leader Ho Chi Minh used the interregnum following Japan's surrender to declare independence and to begin establishing a Viet Minh government, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), in September 1945. By incorporating non-communist nationalists, he created a broad coalition that seemed likely to be able to consolidate Vietnam's independence, at least in the north. The Chinese forces who entered northern Vietnam five weeks later to accept the Japanese surrender were rapacious, but they opposed French attempts to recover authority and recognized Ho's government as legitimate. In March 1946, however, Ho agreed to a French proposal to recognize the DRV as a unit within a larger Indochinese Federation, prior to the reunification of the north and south (which had been re-occupied by France with British help). As Chinese troops withdrew, French forces took their place. Conflict with the DRV soon began and French forces drove the DRV from most

Mao Tse-tung declared the birth of the PRC in Peking, which once again became the capital of China.

of the larger cities and towns. Meanwhile, especially in the south, French authorities had begun to construct a cooperative relationship with less radical nationalists, including the former emperor, Bao Dai. In June 1948, these groups agreed to the creation of a State of Vietnam, which would have autonomy within the French Union. In response, a congress of communist cadres in August 1948 decided on a radical path: rather than broadening the coalition of 1945 to compete with the French, they chose a closer alignment with the international communist movement and a programme of radical land reform in the territories they controlled. In doing so, they created a sharp line between themselves and nationalists who were willing to accommodate with France. Not until the CCP victory in China in late 1949, however, did this strategy begin to bear fruit. With new access to Chinese military support, the Vietnamese communists laid the groundwork for guerrilla war that eventually led to the French defeat.

The withdrawal of token Chinese forces from Laos in March 1946 enabled French forces to return and drive the Lao Issara government into exile. In line with their efforts to construct a moderate coalition in Vietnam, French authorities in Laos then constituted the territory as a kingdom, with the former king of Luang Phrabang as constitutional monarch. Elections were held in April 1947, but politics lay in the hands of around twenty interconnected elite families. It was clear that the future of Laos would be hostage to developments elsewhere in Indochina. Cambodia, too, was fragile. Under King Sihanouk the former protectorate obtained formal autonomy in January 1946, and national elections were held in September, resulting in an absolute majority for the moderate nationalist Democratic Party. In the countryside, however, a variety of armed groups fought under the general name Khmer Issarak ('Free Khmer'), some of them sponsored by conservative Thai forces and others with Vietnamese communist connections.

Internal conflict between its exiled leaders, a cooling of Thai support under Phibun after 1948 and the achievement of quasi-independence at home saw the dissolution of the Lao Issara in 1949 and the return of most exiles. However, some followed the Red Prince to Vietnam where they formed the Pathet Lao. Above: General Vo Nguyen Giap and Prince Souphanouvong planning the Upper Laos campaign in 1953, a key element in the defeat of the French at nearby Dien Bien Phu the following year.

Thai support for the anti-communist Khmer Issarak reflected the return to power in April 1948 of Thailand's wartime leader, Phibun Songkhram. Compromised by his wartime collaboration with Japan, Phibun had been displaced by leaders more sympathetic to the West. In January 1946 the conservative Khuang Aphaiwong won national elections to become the country's first elected prime minister. Within weeks, however, his government lost a vote of confidence in parliament and

he was replaced by the progressive Pridi Panomyong. Pridi successfully negotiated a post-war settlement that treated Thailand as a victim of Japanese aggression, rather than as a Japanese ally. This policy eased Thailand's entry into the United Nations. The price for this rehabilitation included restoring to France the territories that Thailand had recovered from Laos and Cambodia in 1940–41, but the country was not required to pay reparations or give up any territory it had held before that war. Pridi's standing, however, was compromised by the mysterious killing of young King Ananda Mahidol in July 1946. He was forced to resign and in November 1947 the army seized power. Phibun's accession marked the start of a long series of anti-communist military-backed regimes closely aligned with the United States.

Whereas Thailand had firmly reoriented to a pro-Western stance by 1948, Burma was increasingly isolated. The country had become independent on 4 January 1948 as the Union of Burma, which incorporated Burma Proper (dominated by ethnic Burmese), the hill regions of the Shan, the Kachin and the Chin, which had been administratively separate during the British period, and the small Karen-ni states, which remained formally outside British Burma. This Union was the outcome of an agreement between minority leaders and the Burmese leader Aung San at Panglong in the Shan States in February 1947. It failed, however, to reconcile the complex and conflicting interests of the many large ethnic groups in Burma, especially in regions such as the Irrawaddy Delta and northern Tenasserim, where

Independence for Burma ushered in decades of civil war with Rangoon itself nearly falling to Karen rebels in 1949.

different ethnic groups were closely intermingled. The potential unifying power of Aung San, moreover, was lost when he was assassinated, along with much of his cabinet, in July 1947. Accordingly, one of his associates, U Nu, became the first prime minister of independent Burma, but he faced immediate rebellion by separate communist-oriented groups known as White Flags, Red Flags and the Revolutionary Burma Army. Ethnic tension quickly grew, too, especially amongst the Karen ethnic group and in Arakan. Minority dissension encouraged the central government to rely increasingly on ethnic Burmese forces, which exacerbated the alienation of the minorities.

Revolution had also broken out in Malaya under the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The party had been strong in the wartime Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, but had agreed to disarm at the end of the war and to concentrate on political and trade union activity. The party saw some possibility for growth in the framework of the Malayan Union, created on 1 April 1946. The Union was still a colony

but was intended as a future independent state with full citizenship rights for all residents, including the substantial Chinese and Indian communities (which together would form a majority of the population). This arrangement aroused alarm amongst the Malay elite, who feared that the established commercial dominance and generally better education of the Chinese would marginalize them in the proposed state. A campaign by the newly created United Malays National Organization (UMNO) persuaded the British authorities to abandon the Union in favour of a new federation of Malaya, which was inaugurated in January 1948. In the federation, Malays were recognized as having primacy as 'sons of the soil' (*bumiputra*) and significant powers were restored to the Malay sultans. These developments encouraged the MCP to adopt a more radical strategy under a new leader, Chin Peng. The party initiated guerrilla attacks in the countryside, prompting a British crackdown. In July 1948, British authorities formally declared a state of emergency, giving themselves sweeping powers of arrest and summary trial. The subsequent jungle war between British forces and the MCP led to enormous disruption in Malayan society, as well as the honing of British counter-guerrilla strategy. The insurgency was effectively defeated by the time of Malayan independence in 1957.

Courtesy of Australian War Memorial, HOB/56/0798/MC

Britain was assisted in its suppression of the Malayan uprising by forces from other Commonwealth countries, including Australia.

The island of Singapore was excluded from the British-sponsored political changes in Malaya, partly because of the continuing importance of the British naval base, partly because its inclusion would have given Chinese an overall majority in the prospective state. In March 1948, the British authorities held general elections on the island, but only 2% of the population was eligible to vote and only six of 22 seats in the Legislative Council were elected. The MCP was also strong in Singapore, and colonial authorities used the draconian Internal Security Act to maintain control. Limited self-government did not come to the island until 1955.

In August 1948, the Indonesian national revolution was in dire straits. For nearly two years after the independence declaration, the new state had been in control of much of the most populous islands of Java and Sumatra. In late 1946, on the eve of the departure of British forces, Republican leaders had reached an agreement with the Netherlands to accept a federation with Dutch-controlled Borneo and eastern Indonesia as a mechanism for a peaceful transition to internationally recognized independence. After the British departure, however, relations between the Indonesian and Dutch sides quickly soured and in July 1947 Dutch forces attacked the Republic, seizing large areas. The Repub-

lic lost more than half its territory on Java. Political tensions mounted, and the old antagonisms among Islamic, communist and liberal ideas of Indonesia's identity resurged. In May 1948, after the rump Republic had signed another agreement with the Netherlands accepting a more restrictive federal solution, S.M. Kartosuwirjo declared an Islamic Republic of Indonesia in the hills of West Java; in Central Java the Indonesian Communist Party, like its Vietnamese counterparts, adopted a more radical stance and came increasingly into conflict with the government and with conservative military forces. In September 1948, the party was drawn into a rebellion that spread from the town of Madiun to much of East Java. After brutalities on both sides, the rebellion was suppressed and its leaders killed.

Courtesy of Dutch National Archives

Captured communist rebels in Madiun being questioned shortly before their execution.

Hoping that these events signalled the death throes of the Republic, the Dutch authorities launched a second military campaign in December. Although they seized the remaining Republican territory in Java and captured the cabinet, they were unable

Courtesy of Dutch National Archives

Dutch troops enter Solo (Surakarta) in central Java, 1948.

to cope with widespread non-cooperation and guerrilla resistance. The Netherlands also lost the support of the United States, which feared that Dutch rule would only encourage Indonesians to turn to communism. The Dutch military successes soon turned into a political and diplomatic defeat and they were forced to concede independence at the end of 1949, though they retained the territory of West New Guinea, claiming that it was ethnically distinct from Indonesia.

The Philippines, by contrast, had received its independence amicably from the United States in 1946, albeit at the cost of permitting American bases to remain in the country and of giving American citizens economic rights comparable to those of Filipinos. The new President Manuel Roxas addressed the independence celebrations with the words, 'Our safest course … is in the glistening wake of America

Kumander Liwayway, 'Huk' commander. Women played a central role in the Hukbalahap rebellion, one of the most significant peasant-based revolutions in modern Philippine history. As spies, organizers, nurses, couriers, soldiers and even military commanders, women worked closely with men to resist first the Japanese occupation and later, after the war, to challenge the new Philippine republic.

whose sure advance with mighty prow breaks for smaller craft the waves of fear.' Roxas had been wartime advisor to the Japanese-sponsored Philippines government of José Laurel, and in 1947 he pardoned leaders who had been imprisoned for collaboration with Japan. As in Malaya, communists had played a major role in local resistance to Japanese occupation. Immediately after the war, the Philippine communists hoped to make headway democratically and they demobilized their army, the Hukbalahap. Government repression and their own impatience to come to power, however, soon drove them back into rebellion. When Roxas died unexpectedly in April 1948, his successor, Elpidio Quirino, who was considered strongly anti-collaborationist, sought a rapprochement with the Hukbalahap, promising social reforms. Quirino's administration, however, was dominated by members of the old elite, who blocked most efforts at reform. A U.S. report in 1950 concluded that the standard of living of most people was 'lower than before the war'.

The end of the Second World War in August 1945 marked the start of a new period of turmoil in Asia. The Japanese surrender, taking place while Japanese troops were still in place in Korea and in large areas of China and Southeast Asia, created a partial vacuum of power and authority. Forces from the pre-war order – the colonial powers in Southeast Asia and the Kuomintang in China – rushed to fill the vacuum, but forces aspiring to change also moved fast. Both nationalists and communists (the two were by no means separate or distinct categories) seized the initiative in many regions. American forces took charge in Japan and sought to transform Japanese society. The Japanese surrender thus triggered a new set of conflicts. The tasks of bringing the war to an end – accepting the Japanese surrender, repatriating Japanese settlers and military personnel, and dealing with collaborators and war criminals – intertwined with new conflicts arising from decolonization and the onset of the Cold War. The hundred days that followed the surrender formed a crucial moment that set the trajectory towards victory, defeat or compromise for the competing forces. The thousand days that ensued saw this trajectory carried through. Even today, more than 25,000 days after Japan's surrender, echoes of 1945 can still be heard throughout the region.

Editors' Note

Nearly 100 people have shared their time, expertise and resources in this project. Arguably, many more contributors were necessary – the subject was complex and contentious, and it covered a vast stretch of eastern Asia from the northern reaches of Mongolia and Manchuria to the southern islands of Indonesia. Thanks to the efforts and dedication of more people than can be mentioned here, the online face of the project (www.EndOfEmpire.Asia) launched eight months after we were first approached in mid-February 2105 by NIAS Press's Editor-in-Chief, Gerald Jackson, with his project outline. Now this printed volume nears completion and smaller, spinoff country studies are already germinating.

END OF EMPIRE
100 Days In 1945 That Changed Asia And The World.
Headlines and Analysis
The Project
About NIAS
24 September 1945
25 September 1945
26 September 1945
Aung San stakes his future on political success
Court to try Filipino collaborators established
Aung San (in kakhi uniform)
Free Thai soldiers celebrate 'victory' in Bangkok

The online face of the project at www.EndOfEmpire.Asia.

The timing of this project has been a constant challenge, especially for those of us already overcommitted with other endeavours, and the invitation sent out to participating scholars was necessarily and intentionally vague. The reply of one scholar neatly encapsulated the logistical and collaborative challenges that ensued. While provisionally accepting our invitation, he added:

> 'These responses [to a general invitation to participate, details of which would be worked out later], such as they are, I am happy to provide you, while reserving commitment about tasks not yet specified, in a context not fully supplied, and on a timetable which sounds damn near impossible.'

Despite the large number of contributors, we decided that the best way to draw on their experience was to step back and let the volume develop as it would, confident that our scholarly community would be effective in both identifying key historical moments and producing intelligible information. (At the same time, David Stuligross and Gerald Jackson at NIAS Press were working on the sidelines to keep the overall project on track.)

The initial idea was to establish ten country-based groups (Burma, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Korea, Malaya, Mongolia–Manchuria, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam), each headed by a country editor who had the authority to invite scholars to their group. The resulting teams were to work independently of the others, their autonomy ensuring that the real experts were in control of scholarly production. The reality was somewhat different, with teams working more diffusely in reflection of the many transnational connections that arose during the period under study.

To help stimulate the initial brainstorming, each group was given a NIAS-produced bare-bones country chronology and a few ideas for pull-out 'vignettes' (short essays). These outlines bear little resemblance to the volume you have in your hands, but our intention was met: first, to construct a broad chronology of events that covers the 100-day period beginning with the bombing of Hiroshima and which spans the entire region of eastern Asia; and, second, to illuminate these events with short essays, maps, photographs, diary excerpts, and other materials.

It turned out that crafting the chronology entries required not just detailed knowledge of the period but also considerable intellectual energy and tenacity. Certain contributors played important roles here. To name a few when many others provided invaluable input is a little unfair but even so we wish to recognize the added efforts of Li Lin, Kwong Chi Man, Bruce Reynolds, Martin Rathie, David Marr, Shawn McHale, François Guillemot, Paul Kratoska and Geoffrey Gunn. That said, the individual country chronologies and the final integrated timeline are the collective achievement of all participants.

Discussions among the experts while formulating the chronology were not without their contentious moments, but proved to be both illuminating and invigorating. Scholars with differing regional foci and theoretical predispositions have varying understandings not only of what is relevant but also of what actually happened. When the full chronology was presented to the entire group, a healthy dialogue emerged that strengthened the whole. One scholar wrote, for example, 'Unless you are referring to warm bullets, a claim that British troops were "warmly welcomed" on their arrival in Saigon might raise some eyebrows.' More generally, events sometimes appeared in more than one country chronology, each time with a different tone and emphasis. We presented these contradictions to the full group and, again, let the experts sort things out. For all of these reasons, we are confident that what stands in the volume (and online) is a reasonable presentation of a complicated history.

As an editorial choice, vignette authors were invited to write on their own authority. Citations to the literature in support of the mass of factual claims could have doubled the length of the book without making it more authoritative. As a substitute for citations, we instituted a multi-level review process. First, we invited known authorities in their field to contribute to precisely those areas in which they are recognized as experts. Second, each country chronology was the collective effort of the members of that country group. Third, the vignettes were subjected to a formal review and revision process. Fourth, the entire collective had a chance to comment on both vignettes and the full chronology after they had been declared 'ready to typeset' by the relevant country group. And, finally, all contributors have been sent the final proof of the volume before it goes to print. In short, no changes have been made without the author's approval. The authors remain the authorities.

As is quite evident, the whole presentation, as well as each of its components, is the result of a massive intellectual and physical effort. Throughout this process, Gerald Jackson and David Stuligross have been twin towers of strength, keeping us to the task, reassuring us that things were possible and reshaping our prose into something approaching a single authorial voice. Gerald did the major job of typesetting the volume based on a design by Donald Wagner. He also researched and wrote most of the photo captions. In addition, Gerald, David and Karolina Lahdeaho hunted down photographs to augment the valuable images provided by Yamahata Shogo, Francois Guillemot, David Marr and Chris Goscha, among others. Apart from general internet searches, a variety of public and private sources were drawn upon, most notably Peter Chen's WWII Database, the Australian War Memorial, the Netherlands National Archives, the United States National Archives and Records Administration and the Imperial War Museum.

No doubt, in such a complex undertaking, errors and omissions will have escaped the review process. We welcome your feedback, either via the project website (www.EndOfEmpire.Asia) or directly to the press (books@nias.ku.dk). We also welcome new material. As intimated above, more publications are planned and we are already exploring how a broader, less frenetic project might commemorate the 75th anniversary of the war's end in 2020.

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